



Judicial Discipline & Disability Commission

JUDGE LEON N. JAMISON
CHAIRMAN

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DAVID A. STEWART
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PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 18, 2011

The Arkansas Judicial Discipline & Disability Commission today announced that an agreed Letter of Admonishment has been issued to Judge Joseph Boeckmann of the District Court of Cross County, Arkansas.

A copy of the formal admonishment against Judge Boeckmann follows.



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March 18, 2011

Honorable Joseph Boeckmann
Cross County District Court
PO Box 498
Wynne, AR 72373-0498

RE: LETTER OF ADMONISHMENT, Case #09-308

Dear Judge Boeckmann:

At the conclusion of its March 18, 2011 meeting, the Judicial Discipline & Disability Commission voted to accept this agreed Letter of Admonishment to conclude case #09-308. Upon entering into this agreed Letter of Admonishment the following findings are undisputed:

You were an elected part-time district court judge at all times relevant to the matter under consideration. An individual confronted by the police resulted in a phone conversation between you and the Wynne Police Department. Your call made it unclear if you were acting as an attorney, a friend or in your capacity as judge. These actions made it difficult for others to determine your role and your authority. In the future you should avoid being involved in similar situations without clarifying your role and interest. Of course, you should disqualify from cases involving individuals who work for you, are clients in your private practice or are close friends. Canon 2.11 states that "[a] judge shall disqualify himself or herself in any proceeding in which the judge's impartiality might reasonably be questioned..." Also, you have promised to be mindful of Canon 1.2 which mandates that judges act at all times "in a manner that promotes public confidence in the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary, and shall avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety."

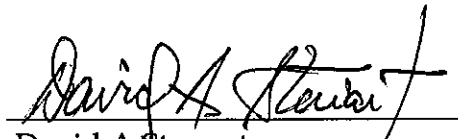
Another individual was detained by police in a vehicle. In this case the vehicle that was detained was actually registered to your family business. You again had phone conversations with the police department about the nature of the detention and when the individual would be free to go back to work. The call gave the impression that you were using your title to aid a private interest. You also helped return stolen goods that were taken by one of your family's part-time employees. This led to a sitting judge handling stolen property, albeit in an effort to turn the property over to authorities.

You should avoid similar situations in the future. You are certainly allowed to be involved in private business interests as a judge. However, you still have to be in compliance with, among other Rules, Canon 3.1 which prohibits a judge from participating in activities that will *"interfere with the proper performance of the judge's judicial duties"* or that would *"appear to a reasonable person to undermine the judge's independence, integrity, or impartiality."*

For your conduct in violating the above provisions of the Code of Judicial Conduct, it is the decision of the Commission that you be admonished. Your willingness to admit you made some errors in judgment, agreement to make changes in the future and your cooperation with this investigation all were considered by the Investigative Panel in agreeing to this sanction.

This public admonishment constitutes adequate discipline and no further action is warranted. Further discipline may occur if the Judicial Discipline & Disability Commission finds similar violations in the future. This Commission action is public information.

BY DIRECTION OF THIS COMMISSION:


David A Stewart
Executive Director