

July 24, 2000

*Honorable Sam Whitfield
Municipal Court Judge
617 Walnut Street, #245
Helena, AR 72342*

Re: Case #99-240

Dear Judge Whitfield:

At a probable cause hearing on July 21, 2000, the Judicial Discipline & Disability Commission decided to issue a letter of admonition to you in Complaint #99-240. In that complaint, the Commission found that you violated the Code of Judicial Conduct by failing to file reports required by law and pay an agreed upon fine in a timely manner.

At a probable cause hearing, the Commission reviewed its file and your response to the Statement of Allegations served on you. The allegations were:

- 1. During the 1998 primary election, you were an unsuccessful candidate for state representative in your district. A.C.A. section 7-6-207(a)(1) requires candidates to file certain campaign contribution and expenditure reports during their campaigns. You failed to file monthly contribution and expenditure reports for March 1998, April 1998 and failed to file a 10-day pre-election contribution and expenditure report for the primary election.*
- 2. On or about December 16, 1998, you agreed with and approved the Arkansas Ethics Commission's entering a Consent Order wherein you were fined \$750 and compelled to file the required campaign contribution and expenditure reports.*
- 3. On January 1, 1999, you became the Helena Municipal Court Judge.*
- 4. On July 29, 1999, a judgment and order was signed and entered by a Pulaski County Circuit Court judge requiring you to pay the \$750.00 fine and to file the required reports.*

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5. *On September 9, 1999, the Arkansas Ethics Commission filed an order to compel you to appear and show cause why you should not be held in contempt for failure to pay the court ordered assessed fine and for failure to file the campaign contribution and expenditure reports. You filed the three required reports on September 16, 1999 and completed paying the fine in July 2000.*

The Commission found that your delay in filing the required reports and paying the fine were inappropriate and inconsistent with maintaining the high standards of conduct essential in preserving the integrity of the judiciary. This constitutes a violation of Canons 1 and 2A of the Arkansas Code of Judicial Conduct. It is the judgment of this Commission that you be hereby admonished.

This public admonition constitutes adequate discipline and no further action is warranted. This Commission action is public information.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMISSION:

Sincerely,

*James A. Badami
Executive Director*

JAB:db