



NEW YORK STATE
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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NEWS RELEASE

December 20, 2022

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Town Justice in Orleans County Resigns While Under Investigation for Inappropriate Facebook Posts

Dawn M. Keppler, a Justice of the Shelby Town Court, an Associate Justice of the Ridgeway Town Court, and an Associate Justice of the Yates Town Court, Orleans County, resigned while under investigation by the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct for making inappropriate posts on Facebook.

Judge Keppler was apprised by the Commission in April 2022 that it was investigating a complaint that she improperly promoted prejudicial and inflammatory content on Facebook, and that she inappropriately lent the prestige of her judicial office to advance the private interests of others.

Judge Keppler resigned from judicial office on December 2, 2022, and agreed never to seek or accept judicial office at any time in the future. The Commission accepted a stipulation to that effect signed by the judge, her attorney and the Commission's Administrator.¹

¹ The Stipulation was signed on December 2, 2022. The Commission issued an order accepting it on December 15, 2022.

Judge Keppler waived the statutory provision of confidentiality applicable to Commission proceedings, to the limited extent that the stipulation and Commission's order accepting it would be public.

Judge Keppler, who is not an attorney, had been a Justice of the Shelby Town Court since 1999, and an Associate Justice of the Ridgeway and Yates Town Courts since 2004 and 2011, respectively. Her current terms would have expired on December 31, 2023.

The stipulation and the Commission's order can be found on the Commission's website: www.cjc.ny.gov.

Statement by Commission Administrator

Commission Administrator Robert H. Tembeckjian made the following statement.

“Judges must approach social media with caution. Public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the courts is shaken whenever a judge originates or republishes social media posts that are insulting to particular individuals or groups, stridently political, or otherwise brash and indiscreet.”

Statistics Relating to Prior Commission Decisions

The Commission has accepted 121 such permanent resignation stipulations since the procedure was instituted in 2003.

Since 1978, the Commission has also issued 281 determinations of admonition against judges in New York State, 347 determinations of censure and 178 determinations of removal.

The Court of Appeals has reviewed 101 Commission determinations. The Court accepted the Commission's sanctions in 85 cases (76 of which were removals, six were censures and three were admonitions). Of the remaining 16 cases, two sanctions were increased from censure to removal, and 13 were reduced: nine removal determinations were modified to censure, one removal was modified to admonition, two censures were modified to admonition, and one censure was rejected and the charges dismissed. The Court remitted one matter to the Commission for further proceedings. One request for review is pending.

Counsel

Judge Keppler was represented by Daniel M. Killelea of Gilmour & Killelea, LLP, 121 Prospect St #1, Attica, NY 14011, (585) 937-8987.

The Commission was represented by Deputy Administrator John J. Postel, Senior Attorney M. Kathleen Martin, and Senior Investigator Betsy Sampson.

Background Information on Judge Keppler

First Took Office:

Shelby Town Court: 1999

Ridgeway Town Court: 2004

Yates Town Court: 2011

Current Terms Expire: December 31, 2023

Members of the Commission

The Commission members serve four-year terms. A list of members is appended.

The Public File

The stipulation and order are attached.

MEMBERS OF THE STATE COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

| Member | Appointing Authority | Term End |
|--------------------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| Joseph W. Belluck, Esq., Chair | Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo | March 31, 2024 |
| Taa Grays, Esq., Vice Chair | Senate President Pro Tem Andrea Stewart-Cousins | March 31, 2023 |
| Hon. Fernando M. Camacho | Former Chief Judge Janet DiFiore | March 31, 2024 |
| Jodie Corngold | Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo | March 31, 2023 |
| Hon. John A. Falk | Former Chief Judge Janet DiFiore | March 31, 2025 |
| Hon. Angela M. Mazzarelli | Former Chief Judge Janet DiFiore | December 31, 2022 ² |
| Hon. Robert J. Miller | Governor Kathy Hochul | March 31, 2026 |
| Marvin Ray Raskin, Esq. | Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie | March 31, 2026 |
| Ronald J. Rosenberg, Esq. | Former Senate Minority Leader John J. Flanagan | March 31, 2024 |
| Graham B. Seiter, Esq. | Assembly Minority Leader William A. Barclay | March 31, 2025 |
| Akosua Garcia Yeboah | Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo | March 31, 2025 |

² Judge Mazzarelli's term on the Commission will end upon her retirement from judicial office on December 31, 2022.