



NEW YORK STATE  
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

ROBERT H. TEMBECKJIAN  
ADMINISTRATOR & COUNSEL

CORNING TOWER, SUITE 2301  
EMPIRE STATE PLAZA  
ALBANY, NEW YORK 12223

MARISA E. HARRISON  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

518-453-4600 518-299-1757  
TELEPHONE FACSIMILE  
www.cjc.ny.gov

## NEWS RELEASE

*February 9, 2022*

**Contact:**

***Marisa E. Harrison, Public Information Officer***  
*(518) 288-8658*

### **Town Justice in Saratoga County Resigns While Under Investigation for Nepotism**

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Nancy M. Sunukjian, a Justice of the Waterford Town Court, Saratoga County, resigned while under investigation for nepotism by the New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct.

The Commission apprised Judge Sunukjian in January 2022 that it was investigating a complaint alleging that, in her capacity as Director of the court system's Office of Justice Court Support (OJCS), she (1) arranged to hire the then-fiancée (now spouse) of a relative and (2) retaliated against another court system employee who opposed the hire.<sup>1</sup>

Judge Sunukjian was scheduled to give testimony regarding this matter at the Commission on January 25, 2022. Instead, she tendered her resignation, effective February 15, 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 and the Commission's Administrator and closed its investigation.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Judge Sunukjian no longer serves as Director of OJCS.

<sup>2</sup> The Stipulation was signed on January 26, 2022. The Commission accepted it and issued an order closing the matter on February 3, 2022.

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

Judge Sunukjian, who is an attorney, had been a Justice of the Waterford Town Court since 2010. Her current term would have expired on December 31, 2023.

The stipulation and the Commission's order closing the case can be found on the Commission's website: [www.cjc.ny.gov](http://www.cjc.ny.gov).

### **Statement by Commission Administrator**

Commission Administrator Robert H. Tembeckjian made the following statement.

“The administration of justice is compromised whenever someone gets a court system job on the basis of nepotism or favoritism. Even where the hiree may be qualified, landing the position through a judge's special influence rather than on merit – and retaliating against someone who objects to the wrongdoing – corrodes public confidence in the integrity of the judiciary.”

### **Statistics Relating to Prior Commission Decisions**

The Commission has accepted 112 such stipulations since the procedure was instituted in 2003.

Since 1978, the Commission has issued 278 determinations of admonition against judges in New York State, 340 determinations of censure and 176 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.

**Counsel**

In the proceedings before the Commission, Judge Sunukjian was represented by George E. LaMarche, III of LaMarche Safranko Law, PLLC, 987 New Loudon Road, Cohoes, New York 12047, (518) 982-0770.

The Commission was represented by Robert H. Tembeckjian, Administrator and Counsel to the Commission; Cathleen S. Cenci, Deputy Administrator in Charge of the Albany office; and Senior Attorney S. Peter Pedrotty. Investigator Laura Misjak was assigned to the case.

**Background Information on Judge Sunukjian**

First Took Office:	2010
Current Term Expires:	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. They are also available for inspection during regular business hours at the Commission's three offices:

61 Broadway Suite 1200 New York, New York 10006	Corning Tower, Suite 2301 Empire State Plaza Albany, New York 12223	400 Andrews Street Suite 700 Rochester, New York 14604
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**MEMBERS OF THE STATE COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

<b>Member</b>	<b>Appointing Authority</b>	<b>Term End</b>
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	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2024
Jodie Corngold	Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2023
Hon. John A. Falk	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2025
Hon. Angela M. Mazzarelli	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2022
Hon. Robert J. Miller	Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2022
Marvin Ray Raskin, Esq.	Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie	March 31, 2022
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