

>> ALL RISE.
HEAR YE, HEAR YE, HEAR YE,
THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA
IS IN SESSION.
ALL WHO HAVE CAUSE TO PLEA,
DRAW NEAR.
YOU SHALL BE HEARD.
GOD SAVE THESE UNITED STATES,
THIS GREAT STATE OF FLORIDA
AND THIS HONORABLE COURT.
>> LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,
THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA.
PLEASE BE SEATED.
>> GOOD MORNING.
WELCOME TO THE FLORIDA
SUPREME COURT.
THE FIRST CASE ON THE DOCKET
IS THE REPRIMAND OF
JUDGE SUSAN FLOOD.
JUDGE FLOOD, IF YOU'D STEP UP TO
THE PODIUM, PLEASE.
JUDGE FLOOD, WE SUMMONED YOU
HERE TODAY BECAUSE OF CONDUCT
THIS COURT HAS FOUND TO BE IN
VIOLATION OF THE CODE OF
JUDICIAL CONDUCT AND WHICH NOW
REQUIRES US TO IMPOSE
APPROPRIATE DISCIPLINE.
AS THE CODE OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT
RECOGNIZES, JUDGES INDIVIDUALLY
AND COLLECTIVELY MUST RESPECT
AND HONOR THE JUDICIAL OFFICE AS
A PUBLIC TRUST AND STRIVE TO
ENHANCE AND MAINTAIN CONFIDENCE
IN OUR LEGAL SYSTEM.
THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR
JUDICIARY RESTS ULTIMATELY ON
THE TRUST AND CONFIDENCE THAT
THE PEOPLE CONFER UPON JUDGES.
AS A RESULT, ONE OF THIS COURT'S
MOST IMPORTANT DUTIES IS TO
CARRY OUT THE RESPONSIBILITY
GIVEN TO US IN THE FLORIDA
CONSTITUTION TO DISCIPLINE
JUDGES FOR MISCONDUCT.
THIS IS A RESPONSIBILITY WE TAKE
WITH AN UTMOST SERIOUSNESS.
IN THE FINAL ANALYSIS, THE
INTEGRITY OF OUR STATE COURTS AS
AN INDEPENDENT BRANCH OF

GOVERNMENT SUBSTANTIALLY RESTS ON HOW WELL WE POLICE THE MISCONDUCT OF JUDGES. MOST IMPORTANTLY, THE COURT'S EXERCISE OF THIS AUTHORITY MUST BE DONE OPENLY SO THAT THE PUBLIC CAN SEE THAT JUDICIAL MISCONDUCT IS NOT TOLERATED. THAT IS ONE REASON WHY WE ISSUE THESE REPRIMANDS IN OPEN COURT AS PART OF OUR REGULAR ORAL ARGUMENTS, SO THAT THEY WILL BE TELEVISED STATEWIDE AND BROADCAST FROM THE PAGES WE MAINTAIN ON THE WORLDWIDE WEB. JUDGE FLOOD, IN JULY, 2014, YOU ENTERED INTO A STIPULATION WITH THE STATE JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION WHICH HAS BEEN FILED IN THE RECORD. IN IT, YOU AGREE TO THE ALLEGATIONS OF MISCONDUCT AGAINST YOU AND TO THE RECOMMENDED DISCIPLINE. THIS COURT IN ITS OPINION RELEASED ON NOVEMBER 6, 2014, HAS DETERMINED THAT CLEAR AND CONVINCING EVIDENCE SUPPORTS THE STIPULATION YOU HAVE ENTERED. THE FACTS BEFORE US AROSE FROM AN INAPPROPRIATE RELATIONSHIP YOU ENTERED AND MAINTAINED WITH A BAILIFF OVER WHOM YOU EXERCISED SUPERVISORY AUTHORITY. IN YOUR STIPULATION WITH THE JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION, YOU HAVE AGREED THAT THIS RELATIONSHIP WAS ONE THAT WENT BEYOND THE FRATERNIZATION THAT NORMALLY OCCURS. THIS INAPPROPRIATE RELATIONSHIP REACHED A LEVEL THAT PROMPTED YOUR JUDICIAL COLLEAGUES TO APPROACH YOU WITH CONCERNS ABOUT WHAT WAS OCCURRING. YOU HAVE AGREED TO ACCEPT FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR YOUR WRONGDOING AND TO ACKNOWLEDGE THAT THE CONDUCT IN QUESTION NEVER SHOULD HAVE OCCURRED.

YOU HAVE EXPRESSED REGRET AND HAVE APOLOGIZED FOR YOUR ACTIONS AND HAVE SAID THAT YOU WILL TAKE STEPS TO ENSURE THAT THIS MISCONDUCT DOES NOT OCCUR AGAIN. ACCORDING TO THE STIPULATION, YOUR RECORD AS A COUNTY JUDGE OTHERWISE IS UNBLEMISHED AND THE MISCONDUCT THAT OCCURRED HERE WAS AN ISOLATED INCIDENT THAT DOES NOT DEMONSTRATE AN UNFITNESS FOR OFFICE.

IN LIGHT OF YOUR RESPONSIVENESS, CANDOR AND COOPERATION WITH THIS INQUIRY, THE COMMISSION ENDORSED AND WE HAVE ACCEPTED YOUR STIPULATION THAT A PUBLIC REPRIMAND IS THE APPROPRIATE SANCTION FOR YOUR MISCONDUCT. THE JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION CONCLUDED THAT YOU VIOLATED CANON 1 AND CANON 2A OF THE CODE OF JUDICIAL CODE OF CONDUCT.

CANON 1 REQUIRES ALL FLORIDA STATE JUDGES TO MAINTAIN HIGH STANDARDS OF CONDUCT SO THAT THE INTEGRITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF THE JUDICIARY MAY BE PRESERVED. CANON 2A REQUIRES YOU TO RESPECT AND COMPLY WITH THE LAW AND TO ACT AT ALL TIMES IN A MANNER THAT PROMOTES PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE INTEGRITY AND IMPATIENT OF THE JUDICIARY.

YOUR MISCONDUCT IN THIS INSTANCE FELL SHORT OF THE STANDARD REQUIRED OF JUDGES AND THUS UNDERMINED PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN OUR JUDICIAL SYSTEM.

FOR THESE VIOLATIONS OF THE CODE OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT, WE HAVE CONCLUDED THAT YOU MUST BE DISCIPLINED.

THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA HEREBY PUBLICLY REPRIMANDS YOU FOR THE MISCONDUCT.

FINALLY, WE ADVISE YOU TO CONSULT THE LENGTHY BODY OF CASE LAW ISSUED BY THIS COURT IN

DEALING WITH OTHER CASES OF
JUDICIAL MISCONDUCT.
THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF
INSTANCES WHERE THE COURT HAS
AGREED TO A PUBLIC REPRIMAND OF
A JUDGE, AS WE HAVE HERE, BASED
ON REPRESENTATIONS LIKE THOSE
YOU HAVE MADE TO CORRECT
WHATEVER DEFICIENCIES CAUSED THE
MISCONDUCT IN QUESTION.
IN EXAMINING THESE PRIOR CASES,
YOU ALSO WILL FIND THAT
SUBSEQUENT ETHICAL BREACHES BY
THOSE SAME JUDGES HAVE BEEN
VIEWED VERY HARSHLY.
JUDGE FLOOD, YOU ARE HEREBY FREE
TO LEAVE.