

>> ALL RISE.

HEAR YE, HEAR YE, THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA IS NOW IN SESSION.

ALL WHO HAVE CAUSE TO PLEAD, DRAW NEAR, GIVE ATTENTION YOU SHALL BE HEARD.

GOD SAVE THESE UNITED STATES, THE 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 THIS MORNING IS THE REPRIMAND OF JUDGE SANDY KAUTZ.

JUDGE KAUTZ, IF YOU PLEASE STEP UP TO THE PODIUM.

JUDGE KAUTZ, YOU'RE HERE BEFORE THE COURT TODAY BECAUSE OF ETHICAL MISCONDUCT IN YOUR OFFICIAL ROLE AS A JUDGE.

I MUST BEGIN BY SAYING HOW SAD A DAY THIS IS FOR YOU, FOR US, AND FOR THE ENTIRE STATE JUDICIAL SYSTEM.

AT THE MOST FUNDAMENTAL LEVEL YOU HAVE DAMAGED THE PUBLIC'S TRUST AND CONFIDENCE IN OUR STATE COURTS.

THIS IS A VERY SERIOUS MATTER, AND ONE THAT THIS COURT TAKES VERY SERIOUSLY.

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OUR JUDICIARY ULTIMATELY RESTS ON THE TRUST AND CONFIDENCE THAT THE PEOPLE CONFER UPON JUDGES, LIKE YOU, IN OUR DEMOCRATIC FORM OF GOVERNMENT.

THROUGH, THOUGH NONE OF US CAN UNDO WHAT YOU HAVE DONE WE HAVE COMMANDED YOU TO APPEAR TODAY FOR A PUBLIC REPRIMAND THAT IS BEING BROADCAST THROUGHOUT THE STATE.

IT IS ONE WAY WE CAN ASSURE THE PUBLIC THAT WE TAKE

ETHICAL MISCONDUCT BY A JUDGE
VERY SERIOUSLY.

AND THAT WE WILL NOT HESITATE TO
PUNISH ERRANT JUDGES IN A MOST
PUBLIC WAY.

JUDGE KAUTZ, THIS COURT IN ITS
OPINION HAS ACCEPTED A
STIPULATION THAT YOU ENTERED
WITH THE STATE JUDICIAL
QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION ABOUT
THE THREE DISTINCT FORMS OF
MISCONDUCT YOU HAVE EXHIBITED.
YOU HAVE AGREED TO AND WE HAVE
ACCEPTED THE STIPULATION AS ONE
THAT BEST SERVES THE INTERESTS
OF JUSTICE AND OF SOUND JUDICIAL
ADMINISTRATION.

THE FIRST MATTER ARISES FROM
YOUR CONDUCT AND Demeanor
PRESIDING INJUNCTION, JUVENILE
AND DEPENDENCY CASES.

RECORDINGS OF THESE HEARINGS
DEMONSTRATE FRUSTRATION WITH THE
WAY PEOPLE HAVE CALLED UPON YOU
AS A JUDGE TO RESOLVE THE ISSUES
THAT ARE INHERENT IN SUCH CASES.
WHILE IT SEEMS THAT YOU INTENDED
TO FOSTER A MORE SELF-RELIANT
SPIRIT AMONG THESE LITIGANTS,
AT TIMES YOUR CONDUCT Demeaned
THEM OR AVAILING THEMSELVES
OF LAWFUL PROCESS.

YOU HAVE AGREED THAT THIS
CONDUCT WAS NOT IN KEEPING WITH
THE PATIENCE, DIGNITY AND
COURTESY REQUIRED OF YOU AS A
JUDGE BY THE ETHICAL CANNONS.

SECOND, AS A NEW JUDGE, YOU
FAILED TO APPRECIATE THE INPUT
FROM OTHER JUSTICE SYSTEM
STAKEHOLDERS, RESULTING IN
RULINGS THAT MADE IT APPEAR YOU
EITHER DID NOT KNOW THE LAW
OR REFUSED TO APPLY IT.

ALTHOUGH THIS MISCONDUCT MAY NOT
HAVE BEEN DONE WITH AN IMPROPER
PURPOSE, IT HAD THE EFFECT OF
UNDERMINING THE PUBLIC
CONFIDENCE IN OUR COURTS.

YOU NOW HAVE STIPULATED THAT YOU

VIOLATED THE CANNONS OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT BY FAILING TO AVAIL YOURSELF OF THE SUPPORT AND ASSISTANCE OFFERED BY YOUR COLLEAGUES.

THIRD, ON DECEMBER 26, 2012, YOU CAME BEFORE ANOTHER JUDGE'S COURT ARGUING ON BEHALF OF A FAMILY MEMBER ABOUT ALLEGATIONS IN A PROBABLE CAUSE AFFIDAVIT AT HER FIRST APPEARANCE HEARING. YOU ALSO VOUCHERED FOR YOUR FAMILY MEMBER AS A CHARACTER WITNESS AT THAT HEARING AND YOU ASKED THAT THE PRESIDING JUDGE ORDER LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICERS TO HELP HER BY ACCOMPANYING HER TO RETRIEVE HER PERSONAL ITEMS.

JUST KAUTZ, YOU NOW ADMIT IT WAS IMPROPER UNDER THE CODE OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT FOR YOU TO APPEAR IN COURT ON BEHALF OF A DEFENDANT BECAUSE YOU ARE A JUDGE.

TO YOUR CREDIT, YOU HAVE ACCEPTED FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE THREE TIGHT ITEMS OF MISCONDUCTIVE OUTLINED HERE. YOU HAVE ALSO OFFERED YOUR APOLOGY FOR YOUR ACTIONS AND HAVE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF THE ETHICS RULES IMPOSED UPON JUDGES HAS SOMETIMES BEEN ERRONEOUS.

IN AGREEING WITH YOUR STIPULATION THIS COURT HAS RELIED UPON THE JUDICIAL QUALIFICATION COMMISSION'S FINDINGS, SPECIFICALLY, THE JUDICIAL QUALIFICATION CONCLUDED THAT YOUR ACTIONS WERE MISGUIDED BUT WERE NOT-- MISGUIDED BUT NOT ILL-INTENTIONED.

WE ACCEPT THE JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS FINDINGS AS EMBODY IN YOUR STIPULATION. FOR THESE REASONS WE HEARBY REPRIMAND YOU FOR YOUR ETHICAL VIOLATIONS.

YOUR PUBLIC REPRIMAND IS

CONCLUDED AND YOU MAY LEAVE.