

IN THE ALABAMA COURT OF THE JUDICIARY

IN THE MATTER OF:

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JAMES T. PATTERSON

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CASE NO. 62

CIRCUIT JUDGE

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MOBILE COUNTY, AL

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CENSURE

James T. Patterson, a Circuit Court Judge in Mobile County, Alabama, is hereby publicly censured by the Alabama Court of the Judiciary.

The Alabama Court of the Judiciary is a nine-member constitutionally created judicial body that is convened to hear complaints filed by the Alabama Judicial Inquiry Commission pertaining to alleged violations of the Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics. Those Canons were adopted by our Alabama Supreme Court “as a code for judges and a declaration of that which the people of the State of Alabama have a right to expect of them.” Preamble, Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics.

On October 27, 2022, the Alabama Court of the Judiciary convened, in a public hearing, to consider a complaint filed by the Alabama Judicial

Inquiry Commission charging Judge Patterson with violating the Canons of Judicial Ethics and to also consider the “Agreement and Stipulation of Parties” submitted by joint motion of the parties pursuant to Rule 10, Rules of Procedure of the Judicial Inquiry Commission.

The Alabama Court of the Judiciary accepted the proposal of the parties and, based on Judge Patterson’s admissions, found Judge Patterson guilty of violating the Canons of Judicial Ethics by: (1) “exhibiting inappropriate demeanor and temperament ... Judge Patterson violated [Canons 1, 2A, 2B, 3A(2), and 3A(3)] of the Alabama Canons of Judicial Ethics by making denigrating comments about the Governor of the State and the presiding judge of the circuit, using cuss words and/or profanity, and making otherwise highly inappropriate comments”; and (2) abusing his judicial authority and violating Canons 1, 2A, 2B, 3A(1), and 3A(4) by “declaring acts and statutes regarding fees unconstitutional and issuing an order redirecting court funds to address budgetary concerns, thereby denying the full right to be heard belonging to every person legally interested in a proceeding.”

Judge Patterson cooperated with the investigation, and he has acknowledged that his actions were inappropriate and contrary to the required temperament of a judge. Judge Patterson was suspended without pay for a period of 45 days. Because he has been disqualified from service with pay since June 15, 2022, however, Judge Patterson was reinstated to service without pay effective October 27, 2022, and will be restored to pay on his 46th day of service. As a result of the acceptance by the Alabama Court of the Judiciary of the parties' proposed joint resolution, Judge Patterson is publicly censured for his misconduct.