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THOMAS D. HALL
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CLERK, SUPREME COURT
BY

BEFORE THE
FLORIDA JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION

INQUIRY CONCERNING A JUDGE, SC12-

JUDITH W. HAWKINS, NO.11-550

NOTICE OF FORMAL CHARGES

TO: The Honorable Judith Hawkins,
Leon County Courthouse, Room 265-A
301 South Monroe Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

The Investigate Panel of the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission, at its meeting of October 4, 2012, by a vote of the majority of its members, pursuant to Rule 6(f) of the Rules of the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission and Article V, Section 12(b) of the Constitution of the State of Florida, finds that probable cause exists for formal proceedings to be instituted against you. Probable cause exists on the following formal charges:

USE OF YOUR JUDICIAL OFFICE TO PROMOTE A PRIVATE INTEREST

Canon 2B states, in part, "A judge shall not lend the prestige of judicial office to advance the private interests of the judge or others."

1. You have established a for profit business named Gaza Road Ministries. It has a website: www.gazaroadministries.com. On that website you offer for sale "Products" and "Souvenirs." On the "Order Page" you list the products you have for sale that are linked to the "PayPal" network for payment into your account.

2. On the slideshow page of the website, the first picture is of you in judicial robes sitting on the Leon County Court bench. Two other pictures in the slideshow also show you in judicial robes.
3. In addition you have sold or attempted to sell your books, study guides, and other publications in the Leon County courthouse, in the parking garage of the courthouse, in your Chambers, and even in the Courtroom in which you preside. The purchasers of your books and other publications include attorneys who regularly appear before you and court staff. There is a disparity in authority between your position and those to whom you have sold within the courthouse.
4. You use your Leon County email account, your Judicial Assistant, and your office spaces and equipment within the Leon County Courthouse to create, edit and promote the products you have for sale through Gaza Road Ministries.
5. Gaza Road Ministries is a for profit business. For the calendar year ending December 31, 2011 you reported it as a Business Interest that generated income to you in the amount of $13,518.00.
6. Your involvement with Gaza Road Ministries has caused you to devote less than your full time and full attention to your judicial duties. You have explained that as a judge, you and your Judicial Assistant have a great deal of free time, so you feel free to use your judicial chambers and out-of-court free time to conduct your for profit private business, and schedule business appointments. You often take time away from your judicial duties to promote your business to the detriment of the prompt and efficient administration of justice.

The foregoing conduct, if proved as alleged, constitutes inappropriate conduct and violates Canons 1, 2A, 2B, 3A, and 3B(8) the Code of Judicial Conduct.

You are hereby notified of your right to file a written answer to these charges within twenty (20) days of service of this notice upon you. The original of your response and all subsequent pleadings must be filed with the Clerk of the Florida Supreme Court, in accordance with the Court's requirements. Copies of your response should be served on the undersigned Special Counsel for the Judicial Qualifications Commission, and the General Counsel of the Commission.

Respectfully submitted,

By: David L. McGee
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Pensacola, FL 32501
Special Counsel for
Florida Judicial Qualifications
Commission

and

FLORIDA JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS
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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a true and correct copy of the foregoing Notice of investigation has been furnished by U.S. Mail and Electronic Mail to Counsel for Judge Hawkins, Gerald Kogan, Esq., 2655 S. Le Jeune Road, Ph IG, Coral Gables, FL 33134-5832 this 5th day of December, 2012.

Gregory R. Miller
Special Counsel