

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE**  
**STATE OF FLORIDA**

**INQUIRY CONCERNING A JUDGE,**

**No. 12-551**

**DEBRA L. KRAUSE**

**FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION OF DISCIPLINE**

The Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission (the "JQC") served a Notice of Investigation on Circuit Judge Debra L. Krause, Fifth Circuit, pursuant to Rule 6(b) of the Florida Judicial Qualification Commission Rules.

The Investigative Panel of the Commission has now entered into a Stipulation with Judge Krause in which Judge Krause admits that her conduct, in conducting her campaign for judicial office was improper. This conduct violated 1, 6B, 7A(1), 7A(3) and 7C(3) of the Code of Judicial Conduct, and sections 106.07, 106.08, and 106.14, and 106.143(6) Florida Statutes, as set forth in the Stipulation submitted herewith.

Judge Krause admits that she purchased a table at a Republican Party fundraiser with funds from her campaign account contrary to the non-partisan nature of judicial elections. This contravenes section 106.143(6), Florida Statutes and Canon 7 of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

Judge Krause further admits that some of her early campaign materials failed to contain the necessary qualifier "for" as required for non-incumbent candidates. This contravened section 106.000, Florida Statutes.

Judge Krause also accepted funds from her husband in excess of the \$500 contribution limit imposed by campaign law. This violated section 106.000, Florida Statutes.

Judge Krause has been cooperative, responsive, and forthright with the panel, and has admitted the foregoing. She accepts full responsibility, and acknowledges that such conduct should not have occurred. Judge Krause has maintained that the campaign violations were inadvertent and were corrected when discovered. Judge Krause has explained that the contributions she received from her spouse, she believed to be accurately described as in her campaign disclosure forms, but now recognizes that this understanding was improper because the accounts were solely owned and controlled by her husband, even though they considered them to be part of the marital estate.

The Judicial Qualifications Commission has concluded that while the judge's conduct was improper, it resulted from inadvertence or from mistake. None the less, the Commission is bound by controlling precedent in judicial elections cases that such transgressions are not to be treated lightly. Accordingly, the Commission therefore finds and recommends that in the that the appropriate sanction is a public reprimand of Judge Krause along with a fine of \$25,000.

Dated this 22 day of October, 2013.

INVESTIGATIVE PANEL OF THE  
FLORIDA JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS  
COMMISSION

by 

Ricardo Morales, III Chair  
Florida Judicial Qualifications  
Commission  
1110 Thomasville Road  
Tallahassee, Florida 32303