

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

**INQUIRY CONCERNING A JUDGE,**

**SC13-2263**

**THE HONORABLE DEBRA L. KRAUSE**

**No. 12-551, 14-454**

**AMENDED FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATION OF DISCIPLINE**

The Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission (the "JQC") served a Notice of Investigation on Seminole County Judge Debra L. Krause, 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 inappropriate. This conduct violated Canons 1, 2, 6B, 7A(1), 7A(1)(b), 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 is contrary to Canon 7 of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

**Judge Krause further admits that some of her campaign materials failed to contain the necessary qualifier "for" as required for non-incumbent candidates. This contravened section 106.143(6), Florida Statutes.**

**Judge Krause also accepted numerous contributions from her husband in excess of \$500 contribution limit imposed by campaign law. This violated section 106.08, Florida Statutes.**

**While her husband was a judicial candidate, Judge Krause acknowledges that she used social media to seek the assistance of her friends in helping her husband correct the perceived misstatements of a judicial opponent. This conduct violated Canon 7A(1)(b).**

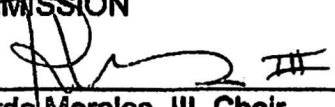
**Judge Krause has admitted the foregoing, accepts full responsibility, and acknowledges that such conduct should not have occurred. Judge Krause has maintained that the campaign violations were inadvertent and were corrected when discovered. Judge Krause has explained that the contributions she received from her spouse, she believed to be accurately described as in her campaign disclosure forms, but now recognizes that this understanding was incorrect because the accounts were solely titled in her husband's name, even though she considered them to be part of the marital estate. Finally, Judge Krause has maintained that her post on social media was supposed to be a private communication between her and her close friends, and that she did not intend to campaign for her husband. Notwithstanding the questions around whether social media activity is ever truly private, there is no question, and the Judge**

acknowledges, that she should not have asked others to do what she could not have done herself; that is to intervene for her husband's judicial campaign.

The Judicial Qualifications Commission has concluded that while the judge's conduct was improper, it resulted from inadvertence or from mistake. Nonetheless 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 the appropriate sanction is a public reprimand of Judge Krause along with a fine of \$25,000.

Dated this 18 day of November, 2014.

INVESTIGATIVE PANEL OF THE  
FLORIDA JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS  
COMMISSION

by   
Ricardo Morales, III, Chair  
Florida Judicial Qualifications  
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