

**BEFORE THE INVESTIGATIVE PANEL OF THE FLORIDA  
JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION**

INQUIRY CONCERNING A JUDGE,

THE HONORABLE SCOTT C. DUPONT

SC16-2103

NO. 16-377

\_\_\_\_\_ /

**Pre-Hearing Statement**

The charges found in the Notice of Formal Charges filed against Judge Scott Dupont center around his re-election campaign in 2016.

In response to the charges, Judge Dupont admitted and took full responsibility for his actions, explaining that he “wholeheartedly believed that the information I [he] posted about his opponent was one hundred percent accurate. [That] it was not until his appearance before the investigative panel that I [he] fully appreciated that it was not, and that I [he] had been careless.” [Response to Charges at page 1]

Reflecting upon his actions, and thinking about his behavior, he admitted that he should have conducted his own independent research and analysis of what was on his website to guarantee that the posted information was accurate in all respects. <sup>1</sup>

To avoid repetition, a copy of Judge Dupont’s response to the charges is attached hereto as Exhibit A.

It should be clearly noted that while, as the charges state and as Judge Dupont has admitted, his actions constitute “inappropriate conduct,” at no time did he knowingly and purposefully

\_\_\_\_\_ <sup>1</sup> Judge Dupont had engaged the services of an experienced campaign manager to assist in his re-election campaign, with the campaign manager further engaging a person experienced in searching public records. His campaign charged \$2,000.00 a month for her services, for a total of \$8,000.00 to manage his campaign. While he relied on these individuals, he recognizes that the responsibility for the accuracy of materials released in his campaign are his and his alone. Accordingly, he takes full responsibility.

RECEIVED, 07/21/2017 03:28:26 PM, Clerk, Supreme Court

misrepresent “the identity, qualifications, present, position, or the facts concerning...an opponent.”<sup>2</sup> He, in good faith, thought that the website was accurate. Notwithstanding the lack of intent, his actions were clearly negligent.

In his response, Judge Dupont waived a formal hearing on the charges before the Hearing Panel. He requested, however, that the Hearing Panel allow him to present testimony via affidavit, letter, or live testimony regarding his character.<sup>3</sup> Attached to this Pre-Hearing Statement to the Panel are copies of letters from eighteen (18) individuals attesting to Judge Dupont’s character, integrity, and fitness to serve; among them are the following:

**Judges**

1. Honorable Clyde E. Wolfe, Circuit Judge, Seventh Judicial Circuit
2. Honorable Michael Traynor, Circuit Judge, Seventh Judicial Circuit, St. Johns County, Florida
3. Honorable Howard Maltz, Circuit Judge, Seventh Judicial Circuit, St. Johns County, Florida
4. Honorable Terence Perkins, Circuit Judge and Chief Judge, Seventh Judicial Circuit, Volusia County, Florida
5. Honorable James R. Clayton, Circuit Judge, Seventh Judicial Circuit, Deland, Florida
6. Honorable Patti A. Christensen, Circuit Court Judge, Seventh Judicial Circuit,

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<sup>2</sup> FL ST CJC “(e) shall not: knowingly misrepresent the identity, qualifications, present position or other fact concerning the candidate or an opponent”

<sup>3</sup> The Amended Order Scheduling Hearing and Pre-hearing Deadlines authorizes the opportunity for Judge Dupont to provide live character witnesses(6) ...“and letters regarding character....”

Palatka, Florida

7. Honorable Joe Boatwright, County Court Judge, Seventh Judicial Circuit, Palatka, Florida

**Individuals**

8. Thomas Bexley – Clerk of Court and Comptroller, Flagler County
9. Tim Smith – Clerk of Court, Putnam County
8. Phyllis Criswell – former Superintendent of Putnam County Schools
10. Cynthia Starling – Regional Coordinator, CDS Family and Behavioral Health, Palatka, Florida

11. Jeffrey Hardy – Former Sheriff of Putnam County (retired)
12. Michelle Garner – Director, Putnam Juvenile Crime Prevention
13. Barry Stewart – Putnam County Police/Athletic League (Director PAL)
14. Sung Lee, Esq., Member of the Florida Bar, St. Augustine, Florida
15. Angie Pye, Former Director of Lee Conley House Domestic Violence Shelter, Palatka, Florida

16. Pastor John Beaird, Pastor of Hinemi Fellowship, St. Augustine, Florida

**Personal Appearances**

17. Honorable Carlos Mendoza, United States District Judge, Middle District of Florida, Orlando Division
18. Honorable Wendy Berger, Judge, Fifth District Court of Appeal, St. Johns County, Florida
19. Honorable John Alexander, Circuit Judge, Seventh Judicial Circuit, St. Johns

County, Florida

20. Michael Hines, Esq., member of The Florida Bar, St. Augustine, Florida
21. Steve Alexander, Esq., member of The Florida Bar, St. Augustine, Florida
22. Bryan Shorstein, Esq., member of The Florida Bar, St. Augustine, Florida

**Additional Witnesses**

1. William Andrews, Esq., member of The Florida Bar, Jacksonville, Florida. Mr. Andrews will testify concerning the case of Delvin Berg vs. The Arc of the St. Johns, Inc. should Mr. Berg appear as a witness.
2. Chelsea R. Winicki, Esq. Ms. Winicki will testify concerning the case of Delvin Berg vs. The Arc of the St. Johns, Inc.
3. Zachery Keller, Esq. Mr. Keller will testify concerning the case of Roger Neihous and Tina Niehous vs. Dennis E. Dixon, should Timothy Keyser, Esq. appear as a witness.

Dated: July 21, 2017

Respectfully submitted,

**LILES GAVIN, P.A.**

/s/ Rutledge R. Liles

Rutledge R. Liles  
Florida Bar No. 102805  
Email: rliles@lilesgavin.com  
Liles Gavin, P.A.  
301 W. Bay St., Suite 1030  
Jacksonville, FL 32202  
T: 904-634-1100  
F: 904-634-1234  
Attorney for Respondent

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a copy of the foregoing has been furnished, via email to the following individuals this 21<sup>st</sup> day of July, 2017:

Lauri Waldman Ross, Esq.  
Counsel to the Hearing Panel for JQC  
Ross & Girten  
9130 S. Dadeland Blvd., Suite 1612  
Miami, FL 33156  
Email: [rossgirten@laurilaw.com](mailto:rossgirten@laurilaw.com)

Henry M. Coxe, III, Special Counsel  
Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission  
Bedell Law Firm  
101 E. Adams Street  
Jacksonville, FL 32202  
Email: [hmc@bedellfirm.com](mailto:hmc@bedellfirm.com)

/s/ Rutledge R. Liles  
Attorney

# **Exhibit A**

**BEFORE THE INVESTIGATIVE PANEL OF THE FLORIDA  
JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION**

**INQUIRY CONCERNING A JUDGE,  
THE HONORABLE SCOTT DUPONT**

No. 2016-2103

**RESPONSE TO CHARGES**

In response to Formal Charges 1-5, I admit and take full responsibility for my actions. While my initial written response to the investigation, and my appearance before the investigative panel, may have given the appearance that I did not fully understand the inappropriateness of my behavior, it did so only because at that time I whole heartedly believed that the information I posted about my opponent was one hundred percent accurate. It was not until my appearance before the investigative panel that I fully appreciated that it was not, and that I had been careless. I regret the tone of my response to the charges and apologize for the impression it may have left.

I have had time to reflect on my actions, and think about my behavior, and in doing so I fully understand I was wrong. I should have conducted my own independent research and analysis of what was on my web site to guarantee that it was accurate in all respects. In this regard I fell short.

I also fully understand the importance of maintaining the integrity of the office to which I was elected six years ago and in which I have had the privilege of serving. As a sitting judge I set the example and in being the example, I must exercise restraint. I understand that I am fully and solely responsible for confirming the accuracy and source of all information disseminated by my campaign and that those responsibilities cannot be delegated.

While my answer to the question regarding following the Constitution was offered in the context of giving an opinion about the law, and when giving opinions about the law judges must state that they will follow the law as written, I now realize that my response was given in the wrong context, and as such, it was inappropriate. I fully understand my responsibilities in following the Constitution, and that the sanctity of the Constitution must always be protected.

I am truly remorseful and apologetic for my behavior. I recognize and understand that I must exercise the utmost discipline in connection with my judicial activities, including the activities of my campaign. I am deeply aware of the need for judges and judicial candidates to set an example of the utmost propriety, judicial demeanor and restraint when required to run in a contested election. The public that I serve should not, and cannot, expect anything less. I have learned a great lesson from this and have grown accordingly.

I regret having placed the Judicial Qualifications Commission and, ultimately, the Florida Supreme Court, in the position of having to address my actions. In taking full responsibility for

my actions, I understand and accept that I will be subjected to sanction for my conduct. This behavior will never happen again.

### WAIVER OF FORMAL HEARING

Please accept this as a waiver of a formal hearing before the Hearing Panel on the charges. I do request, however, that the Hearing Panel allow me to present testimony via affidavit or deposition regarding my character.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Dupont

### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that a copy of the foregoing has been furnished, via U.S. Mail, to the following individuals this 19<sup>th</sup> day of December, 2016.

Lauri Waldman Ross, Esq.  
Counsel to the Hearing Panel for JQC  
Ross & Girten  
9130 S. Dadeland Blvd., Suite 1612  
Miami, FL 33156  
Email: [rossgirten@laurilaw.com](mailto:rossgirten@laurilaw.com)

Eugene Pettis, Esq.  
Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission  
Hearing Panel Chair  
One Financial Plaza, Seventh Floor  
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33394  
Email: [epettis@hpslegal.com](mailto:epettis@hpslegal.com)

Michael Schneider, General Counsel  
Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission  
PO Box 14106  
Tallahassee, FL 32317  
Email: [mschneider@floridajqc.com](mailto:mschneider@floridajqc.com)

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Scott Dupont

### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

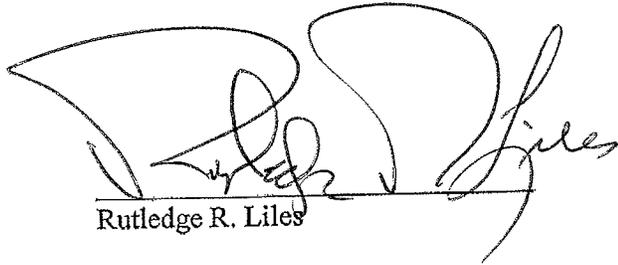
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Lauri Waldman Ross, Esq.  
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Ross & Girten  
9130 S. Dadeland Blvd., Suite 1612  
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Email: [rossgirten@laurilaw.com](mailto:rossgirten@laurilaw.com)

Eugene Pettis, Esq.  
Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission  
Hearing Panel Chair  
One Financial Plaza, Seventh Floor  
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Email: [epettis@hpslegal.com](mailto:epettis@hpslegal.com)

Michael Schneider, General Counsel  
Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission  
PO Box 14106  
Tallahassee, FL 32317  
Email: [mschneider@floridajqc.com](mailto:mschneider@floridajqc.com)

Henry M. Coxe, III, Special Counsel  
Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission  
Brian T. Coughlin, Esq.  
Ashley W. Green, Esq.  
Bedell Law firm  
101 E. Adams St.  
Jacksonville, FL 32202  
Email: [hmc@bedellfirm.com](mailto:hmc@bedellfirm.com)  
[btc@bedellfirm.com](mailto:btc@bedellfirm.com)  
[awg@bedellfirm.com](mailto:awg@bedellfirm.com)



Rutledge R. Liles

## **Exhibit B**



## TOM BEXLEY, Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller

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1769 East Moody Blvd., Building #1 • Bunnell, Florida 32110  
Phone: (386) 313-4400 • Website: flaglerclerk.com

April 7, 2017

Members of the JQC Commission  
c/o Rutledge R. Liles  
Liles Gavin, P.A.  
301 W. Bay St., Suite 1030  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

RE: JQC v. Judge Scott Dupont

I am the current Clerk of the Circuit Court & Comptroller for Flagler County, Florida. In my capacity as Clerk, I regularly come in contact with Judge Scott Dupont. I understand that he is currently involved in a matter pending before the Judicial Qualifications Commission regarding his re-election campaign during 2016.

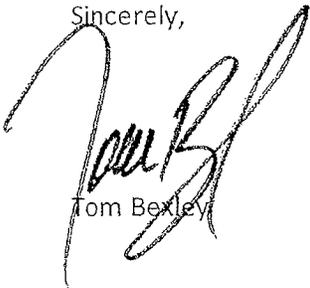
Please accept this letter in support of Judge Dupont. The clerks in my office and I work closely with Judge Dupont, and he has our utmost respect. He has earned the reputation of being an efficient and hard-working judge, always available to assist my office, regardless of whether the problem is large or small.

In my experience, and that of my clerks, Judge Dupont is patient, courteous, humble, and fair in handling matters that come before him. He is a person of faith, integrity, and of the highest character.

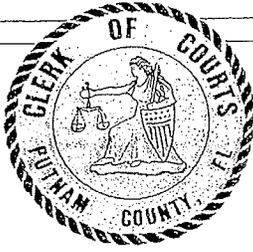
I have been, and continue to be, impressed with his volunteer work with the Putnam County Police Athletic League, the Interface Youth Shelter, truancy, and other organizations, especially devoted to rescuing children.

I ask you to be fair in dispensing justice and allow him to continue to serve our community.

Sincerely,



Tom Bexley



Office of  
Clerk of Court  
Tim Smith

April 3, 2017

Members of the JQC Commission  
c/o Rutledge R. Liles  
Liles Gavin, P.A.  
301 W. Bay St., Suite 1030  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

RE: JQC v. Judge Scott Dupont

I am the current Clerk of the Court for Putnam County, Florida and have served in this capacity for the past 16 years. I have had the pleasure of working with Judge Scott Dupont for the past six years.

I understand that Judge Dupont is currently involved in a matter pending before the Judicial Qualifications Commission regarding his re-election campaign during 2016.

I write this letter in support of Judge Dupont. I and the Deputy Clerks in my office work closely with Judge Dupont, and he has our utmost respect. He has earned the reputation of being an efficient and hard-working judge, always available to assist my office, regardless of whether the problem is large or small.

Over the past six years I have observed Judge Dupont grow and learn the responsibilities that are necessary to become an effective Judge; patient, humble, fair and consistent in resolving matters and interacting with the parties to the case.

In addition he is very effective in managing the Civil Division in both Putnam and Flagler County. In March 2016 Judge Dupont's Division was reassigned to the Civil Division from the Family Division and he has reduced the Civil Pending Caseload significantly since that time. As an example in the Civil non-jury case type the case load was 473 on 3-31-16 the number on 3-31-17 is 301, in the Probate case type the number on 3-31-16 was 466, on 3-31-17 the number is 259. In addition the number of inactive cases during this same time frame has been reduced from 249 to 6.

Judge Dupont is a person of faith, integrity, and of the highest character and supports many community efforts to better the lives of residents of Putnam County. I have been, and continue to be, impressed with his volunteer work with the Putnam County Police Athletic League, the Interface Youth Shelter, truancy, and other organizations, especially devoted to rescuing children.

I ask you to consider all that Judge Dupont has accomplished and the dedication he offers and allow him to continue to serve our community.

Kindest Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim Smith". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the left.

Tim Smith,  
Clerk of Courts  
Putnam County

Judicial Qualifications Commission  
C/O Rutledge R. Liles  
Suite 1030  
301 West Bay St.  
Jacksonville  
32202

To Whom It May Concern:

I was Superintendent of Putnam County Schools from November 2012-2016. One of the many problems we faced was student truancy. The fact that so many of our students were truant not only caused a considerable deficit in learning and test scores, it also cost the school district thousands of dollars each year. Approximately 80% of the student population in Putnam County lives at or below the poverty level, and the graduation rate is consistently at or below 50%. I have worked for the school district for 31 years, and we have always worked diligently to correct the truancy, and therefore change these issues for the better. For years, most cases were turned over to the State Attorney's office, with little action taken. Then one day, in 2013, Judge Scott Dupont came to my office and said, "Let's talk about Truancy Court." In the 28 years I had been with the school district we had never had a judge act concerned or offer to help until Judge Dupont. He took time to go to St. John's County to observe how their Truancy Court worked. He came back ready to make a difference for children and Putnam County. For the next 3 years Truancy Court made an incredible difference in the lives of children who were helpless in getting their parents to get them to school, and improving the truancy rate and our graduation rate. Just look at the December 2016 data on both from the Florida Department of Education!

Our success was a direct result of the efforts of Judge Dupont. He was a genuine, helpful, caring person and was professional and a pleasure to work with. We could not have improved our data without him. The four years I was in office I found Judge DuPont to be a kind and caring person who was driven to do the right thing for all people, especially children.

It is with honor and without hesitation that I vouch for his character as a person and a Judge.

If I can be of further service, please do not hesitate to contact me at 386-937-0474.

Sincerely,



Phyllis L. Criswell  
former Superintendent  
Putnam County Schools

April 10, 2017

Judicial Qualifications Commission  
C/O Rutledge R. Liles  
310 West Bay Street, Suite 1030  
Jacksonville, Florida 32202

RE: The Honorable Scott DuPont

Dear Judicial Qualifications Commission Members,

I am writing in reference to a matter pending before you and on behalf of the Honorable Scott DuPont. It is my hope that you will consider this letter of support when making recommendations in this matter.

I have been employed by CDS Family and Behavioral Health Services Inc. for the past seventeen (17) years in Putnam County, Florida. I am currently the Regional Coordinator for Putnam, Bradford, and Union counties. In this capacity, I serve as the director of Interface Youth Shelter in Palatka where we provide temporary housing and counseling services for youth who are deemed truant, runaway, or ungovernable. We provide both residential and outpatient services to youth ages 10-17. I have served on the Juvenile Justice Council for many years and am currently the co-chair of this committee. I also currently serve as co-chair for the Circuit 7 Human Trafficking Task Force. In this capacity, I have also been involved with both the Family and Juvenile Courts for many years. I began my professional career as a State of Florida Probation and Parole Officer for the Florida Department of Corrections. So I have had experience in the Criminal Courts as well in Pasco and Clay Counties. I provide this brief overview of my experience only to ensure the Commission that I have gained much experience working in the Courts during my career.

I met Judge DuPont several years ago when he began presiding over Juvenile matters in Putnam County. He immediately impressed me with his concern for the youth in the community. I consider myself an advocate for youth, and I recognized that Judge DuPont was also a person who was truly concerned about the serious issues facing our youth. Not only was his concern evident but it also became clear that he intended to assist in seeking solutions. He invited the directors of the local youth serving agencies as well as Court personnel to meet in order for him to understand what services were available and to identify areas of concern. He continued these JLAG (Juvenile Law Advisory Group) meetings quarterly. During these meetings, he gained knowledge of the large number of youth who are habitual truant in Putnam County and he created the SIT (Student Intervention Team). The SIT members began meeting and we continue to meet monthly at the Interface Youth shelter to address the needs of students and families in order to get youth back in school where they can obtain a much needed education. Judge DuPont implemented and presided over the Truancy Court in Putnam County in an efficient and thoughtful manner. He carefully considered the recommendations of the SIT team during Court proceeding in order to rule in the best interest of the youth. As a result of Judge DuPont's

efforts, many students have improved attendance and the Truancy Court continues to operate in Putnam County in the manner in which he implemented the program.

As a further example of his true concern and dedication, he visited the Interface youth shelter in order to have a clear understanding of the services the youth and families receive during their shelter stay. He spent quite a while touring the facility and asking questions of various staff members. I cannot express how appreciative and impressed I was to have a Judge take the time and express such an interest in not only the youth but his willingness to hear from the professionals who are truly working "in the trenches". I think this speaks volumes about his integrity, character, and of his intentions of proceeding in a manner that is admirable. Throughout my career, I have worked in the Courtrooms of several excellent Judges and I consider Judge DuPont to be one that I can include in the same category.

It is my privilege to write this letter of support citing my interactions and impressions of the Honorable Scott DuPont. Please feel free to contact me if needed.

Respectfully,



Cynthia L. Starling  
Regional Coordinator  
CDS Family and Behavioral Health Services Inc.  
2919 Kennedy Street  
Palatka, FL 32177  
(386) 385-0405

Judicial Qualifications Commission

c/o Rutledge R. Liles

Suite 1030

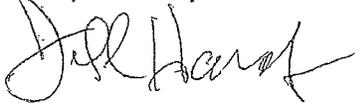
301 West Bay St.

Jacksonville, Florida, 32202

I am the former Sheriff of Putnam County, having served in that position for 8 years. In the course of performing my assigned duties, I came to know Judge Dupont. In my opinion, he is a person of the highest character. His integrity is without question. He was the judge all of my deputies sought out in the middle of the night for the execution of search and/or arrest warrants as he always made himself available. Our undercover drug detectives exclusively used Judge Dupont as they knew that regardless of the hour he was there for them. In fact, he (and his wife) would invite the deputies into their home and fix them breakfast. He is an outstanding judge respected by those who appear before him.. He is fair, patient and courteous. I am aware of the charges brought against him in connection with his reelection campaign and ask that you be just and allow him to continue to serve the citizens of Putnam County.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at # 386-336-0682.

Jeffrey S Hardy

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Hardy", written in a cursive style.

Retired Putnam County Sheriff

April 5, 2017

Judicial Qualifications Commission  
Rutledge R. Liles  
301 West Bay Street, Suite 1030  
Jacksonville, Florida 32202

RE: The Honorable Judge Scott DuPont

Dear Judicial Qualifications Commission Members,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Honorable Judge Scott DuPont. Judge DuPont has made many positive changes in Putnam County and his performance as Putnam County's Juvenile Judge is outstanding. He has a proven track record as a professional, a leader and a mentor.

I have been working with youth in Putnam County for 14 years, currently in prevention, diversion and mentoring programs. I am the Secretary and Executive Board Member for a local youth mentoring and athletic association. I am the Co-Chair for the Putnam County Juvenile Justice Council and the Vice Chair for the Circuit 7 Circuit Advisory Board for the Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ). I also participate on the Truancy Student Intervention Team (SIT). It is in this capacity that I have gained much experience working with Judge DuPont. Although I cannot speak on behalf of my employer or any of my professional affiliations, I would like to give my personal experience working with Judge DuPont.

I will begin by saying that I have never had interaction or availability to another juvenile judge like I have with Judge DuPont. Soon after taking the bench, Judge DuPont invited directors of local youth serving agencies, as well as court personnel to meet, discuss services available and to identify areas of concern during his JLAG (Juvenile Law Advisory Group) and FLAG (Family Law Advisory Group) meetings. This was unprecedented in Putnam County. To my knowledge, this was the first time that all agencies were able to meet and discuss changes to proceedings that would assist all involved, and more importantly to benefit the youth offender in Putnam County.

Judge DuPont also arranged for those attending the JLAG and FLAG meetings to make presentations of their services or pro-active youth causes. He arranged for the agencies attending the JLAG meetings to tour other facilities, such as Hastings Youth Academy/ G4. He even attended one the more punitive diversion programs one Saturday morning. He accompanied the very youth he had ordered into the program. He spoke to youth that morning about making good decisions and encouraged them to use this opportunity to make better decisions in the future.

While listening to the needs and concerns of individuals and agencies working with youth, Judge DuPont took the initiative to seek out a different type of diversion program: one that would focus on restitution for the victim. Judge DuPont and I, along with another member from the JLAG traveled to Alachua County to discuss "Project Payback". Judge DuPont actively advocated for this type of program in Putnam County, which would greatly benefit the youth offender, hold them accountable to their community and victim, and make sure their victim received restitution. I believe this demonstrates his concern for youth, his willingness to bring new ideas to our community and his readiness to get involved by personally taking action.

When Judge DuPont took the Juvenile Delinquency Docket, the climate of juvenile court changed drastically. Historically, Putnam County has been number one in on-campus juvenile crimes as reported to DJJ. Putnam held that "honor" for longer than I care to remember. When Judge DuPont left, our juvenile crime statistics were at our (then) "decade" low. We moved into the 13<sup>th</sup> position for this statistic: our first time moving out of the top ten since I began in 2004. Our latest update for the school year ending 2015-2016 is an 84.27% reduction in on-campus juvenile crime, which includes civil citations. I correlate this change to some of the best practices put in place with the assistance of Judge DuPont. Of course it goes without saying that other stakeholders are also to be applauded for making this statistical change. However true, I believe it took the efforts of all such community leaders such as Judge DuPont to create this drastic level of change.

During one of our early JLAG meetings, it was brought to the judge's attention that there were over 800 open juvenile cases in Putnam County. There were many different examples of why cases were open, but Judge DuPont very quickly made orders to show cause and more importantly held those responsible for this oversight accountable. Within months, that number of cases dropped to under 350.

As I have stated, Judge DuPont has been very active in making positive changes in Putnam County, and was willing to hear first-hand from those involved with youth. He would regularly attend our monthly Juvenile Justice Council meetings. As Vice Chair for the Circuit Seven Advisory Board for DJJ, I am not aware of any other seated judge who is attending the county or circuit level meetings. This is but another example of his level of dedication for the office he holds. I applaud his willingness to hear from individuals from all types of agencies who are working with youth; to listen to what goes on in the "trenches" from those of us with "boots on the ground". It is one thing to hear talk about youth crime trends, the up and coming youth drugs trends, and future legislation for youth. It is entirely another to speak with the people working one-on-one with the youth who are committing the crime, who are using and abusing the trending drugs, and the families affected by these poor decisions. Yet, he was a willing participant. Again, this displays to me his level of dedication to the community he serves and his willingness to go above and beyond.

The Truancy Court proceedings we currently have are a direct result of Judge DuPont's initiative and willingness to bring change. It was his initiative to begin a Truancy Docket in Putnam County, by first speaking with the school superintendent. He had taken the time to speak with other judges who have a truancy docket, and visited their proceedings. He even arranged JLAG participants to visit a truancy proceeding in St. John's County. We were allowed and encouraged to ask questions during our visit. Truancy issues were coming up constantly during our JLAG meetings and delinquency court proceedings. By starting a Truancy Docket, this brought us full circle in Putnam County for decreasing juvenile recidivism. This was yet another way of reducing and addressing all barriers youth had to recidivism. Judge DuPont also aided in creating a truancy Student Intervention Team (SIT). The SIT team is still going strong and is comprised of those agencies who have always been involved with youth prevention and intervention services, but now brings them to the same table for this purpose. This was all through the effort and vision of Judge DuPont and his dedication to address the needs for the youth and families he serves. This is another example of his willingness to take action beyond just hearing cases in court. He was very instrumental in making positive changes to our current systems.

Several years ago, I asked Judge DuPont to address the over 500 graduating seniors in all three Putnam County high schools. He agreed and made himself available to the schools within a very short time frame. He gave a personal and heart felt address to seniors about the importance of making good decisions. He further explored how each decision would impact their very near future, and encouraged them to stay safe on graduation night. By sharing his personal experiences, the seniors could see his sincerity and concern for their

well-being. He explained that hard work was a requirement for success. His address made an impact on attending seniors, which was apparent by the questions they asked him.

In mentoring youth, I can only say that Judge DuPont and his wife Jackie are two of our greatest supporters. I couldn't give you a brighter example of caring for youth and community than these two individuals. Judge DuPont has been to numerous events with our youth, has accompanied our youth on different field trips and has mentored them personally. To encourage them professionally, he invited youth to attend court proceedings and accompanied them on a trip to tour a local youth detention facility. Not only has he personally mentored youth, he has listened to them, prayed with them, encouraged them, cooked for them, and donated food, clothing, shoes and hygiene products to them. More importantly: he has supported them by making himself available to them. His faith has played a huge part in his youth mentoring. As a result, youth have visited his church in St. Augustine and the church has also donated many things for their benefit. Through his partnership, we have received donations from local businesses including items of clothing, work out equipment and even audio/video equipment from different community and faith partners. His dedication to youth is tireless and has continued even after his tenure as our juvenile judge ended.

In closing, I want to address the commission by saying how very proud I am to have had the pleasure of working with Judge DuPont in Putnam County. I have the utmost of respect for him and would welcome the opportunity to work with him again. I know through experience that I can depend on Judge DuPont because he has continually displayed consistency in his involvement. I would wholeheartedly ask that you consider his loyalty and dedication to the office he holds and the youth and families in our community his service has affected. I understand there is a matter which brought him to the attention of this commission. I would ask that you please consider all of the many wonderful things that the Honorable Judge DuPont has done and is still doing for the youth in our county. Please let the many positive actions speak to your heart in knowing that he represents more to this community than a judicial presence during court proceedings.

If you should have any questions regarding my letter in support of Judge DuPont, please feel free to contact me. I have included my contact information and phone number below.

Very Respectfully,



---

Michelle Garner  
105 Sunset Lane  
Palatka, Florida 32177  
mgarneronsunset@msn.com  
386-916-8003

April 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Judge Scott Dupont. I was personally introduced to Judge Dupont at a high school graduation and knew instantly that he had a very special heart for youth. I spoke to him concerning the many programs and activities that occur in Putnam County but the need for more community leaders to step in and help with our youth movement.

He was very interested in volunteering his time to speak to the kids and mentor them through his position as a judge. He invited a group of our youth to the courthouse for a tour and day in court, followed up by a visit to a youth detention facility.

He took his time to answer all the questions and explain how making bad decisions can have a long lasting negative impact in their lives. Judge Dupont showed these youth compassion but yet was firm and honest about moving ahead in life choices.

Later on I had the pleasure of meeting Jackie Dupont, Judge DuPont's wife, and enjoyed their weekly bible study for our youth. They were a big part of our youth learning the bible and instilling good moral values. They were both extremely active in soliciting donations of clothing and hygiene supplies for our youth in need. Their generosity and kindness filled many bags with things our kids would have gone without. I am very thankful for the effort and dedication Judge Dupont brings to Putnam County and the community youth he serves on a daily basis.

Judge Dupont has been a wonderful and positive role model to our youth and continues to attend many events in our community. He is such an asset to our county and will stand in the gap for our youth and be a strong and positive voice for their future.

I am honored to be associated with Judge Dupont and very thankful to know we have a true man of integrity and compassion as a community leader in Putnam County.

Very Respectfully,

  
Barry Stewart

*Law Offices of Shorstein & Lee, LLC*  
*Attorneys at Law*

*John L. Shorstein, Esquire*  
*Sung H. Lee, Esquire*

305 Kingsley Lake Drive, Ste. 701  
St Augustine, FL 32092  
Ph: (904) 829-3035  
Fax: (904) 829-3242

Email: [shorsteinandlee@gmail.com](mailto:shorsteinandlee@gmail.com)  
Web: [www.shorsteinandlee.com](http://www.shorsteinandlee.com)

April 18, 2017

Judicial Qualifications Commission  
c/o Rutledge R. Liles  
310 West Bay Street, Suite 1030  
Jacksonville, Florida 32202

RE: JUDGE SCOTT DUPONT

Dear Madam/Sir,

I had the pleasure of meeting Judge Dupont when he first took the bench. As a newly elected jurist, he shadowed the Honorable John M. Alexander here in St. Johns county to familiarize himself in the family law division. The first thing that I noticed about Judge Dupont was how incredibly humble he was. I, now, believe that is because of his great faith in God.

Since our initial meeting, I have had numerous opportunities to practice law before the Honorable Judge Dupont as the presiding judge. The second thing that I noticed about Judge Dupont was how extremely smart he is. When, and if, you get to see Judge Dupont on the bench and/or read his orders, you will see a jurist who is remarkably analytical and articulate.

I have also had several opportunities to be around Judge Dupont when he was not presiding as a judge, but serving his community. That is when I realized how much he loves his job and his community. He is a person of the highest integrity and character, and he genuinely just wants to serve his community as a jurist.

I am aware of the charges currently pending against him and his deep regret for what occurred during his reelection campaign. I am respectfully requesting that your Commission impose a just sanction that will allow Judge Dupont to continue to serve our community as a jurist. Judge Dupont is a great judge and a great man. He has served our community well and he should continue to do so as a jurist.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. Should you have any other questions or concerns regarding Judge Dupont, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

  
Sung H. Lee, Esquire

# CIRCUIT COURT



Seventh Judicial Circuit  
State of Florida

Suite 305  
Richard O. Watson Judicial Center  
4010 Lewis Speedway  
St. Augustine, Florida 32084  
(904)827-5606

J. Michael Traynor  
Circuit Judge

May 23, 2017

Judicial Qualifications Commission  
c/o Rutledge R. Liles, Liles Gavin PA  
301 West Bay Street, Suite 1030  
Jacksonville, Florida 32202

Re: Circuit Judge Scott C. DuPont (SC16-2103)

To Members of the Judicial Qualifications Commission,

For almost seventeen years, I have been privileged to serve as a Circuit Judge of the 7<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit. I am now its second most senior Judge and have witnessed quite a number of Judges come and go. Although I practiced law for twenty years prior to becoming a Judge, I can't say that anyone at the time was truly prepared for the nature and depth of the judicial office.

When Judge DuPont was first elected and assigned to the Family Law Division in Putnam County, I knew it would be a difficult and challenging position. Although he did meet with some initial criticism regarding his demeanor and disposition, he overcame most by working hard and seeking advice from two of my fellow colleagues, Judge John Alexander and Judge Clyde Wolfe, both well-versed in Family Law. Although I do not see Judge DuPont on a regular basis, I do know from attorneys here in St. Johns County and others in Putnam County, that he is efficient and effective in managing his caseload. He is now assigned to the Civil Division, handling cases in both Flagler and Putnam Counties and again, managing his docket in a conscientious manner. On the personal side, Judge DuPont has always been very friendly and collegial. He is supportive and is always willing to offer assistance. Likewise, Judge DuPont is not afraid to ask questions or to seek advice and is open to suggestions.

Although I am aware of the charges pending against Judge DuPont, I do not feel it is appropriate to suggest a disposition or comment further. However, I do know that he is very contrite and remorseful. I believe he has learned from his mistakes and is consciously trying to improve both as a person and as a Judge.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Michael Traynor in cursive script.  
Michael Traynor  
Circuit Court Judge

JMT/ph



STATE OF FLORIDA  
CIRCUIT COURT SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
RICHARD O. WATSON JUDICIAL CENTER

4010 Lewis Speedway, Room 344  
St. Augustine, Florida 32084

*Howard M. Maltz*  
*Circuit Judge*

*Susan Miller, Judicial Asst.*  
*Tel : (904) 827-5600*  
*Fax: (904) 827-5602*

April 17, 2017

Judicial Qualifications Commission  
c/o Rutledge R. Liles, Esq.  
Liles Gavin, P.A.  
301 W. Bay Street, Suite 1030  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Re: Judge Scott C. Dupont, SCI6-2103

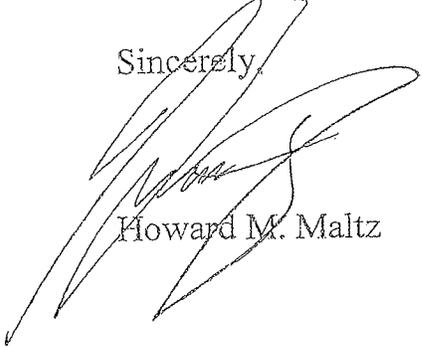
To the Members of the Judicial Qualifications Commission.

I am writing regarding the above-referenced judge pursuant to a subpoena directed to me issued by Judge Dupont's counsel before the Judicial Qualifications Commission. I am a Circuit Court Judge in Florida's Seventh Judicial Circuit, the same circuit as Judge Dupont. I first met Judge Dupont in December 2012, after my appointment to the bench and prior to taking office. At that time, Judge Dupont was very welcoming to me as a colleague, offering assistance as I transitioned from the practice of law to the judiciary. Since that time, I have come to know Judge Dupont a collegial colleague, willing to offer any assistance needed. During my first few years on the bench, Judge Dupont was assigned to the Family Division in Putnam County while I was assigned to the Civil Division in St. Johns County; thus, I cannot opine on his abilities as a jurist during that time. Last year, Judge Dupont was reassigned to the Civil Divisions in Flagler and Putnam Counties. In preparation, Judge Dupont spent several days with me while I conducted proceedings in St. Johns County's Civil Division. Judge Dupont would also call me with questions that arose after he took the civil bench. Judge Dupont

seemed very conscientious and would ask appropriate questions regarding substantive civil law, civil procedure, and caseload management.

I have no personal knowledge regarding the matters before the Judicial Qualifications Commission. Additionally, I feel it would inappropriate to comment on an appropriate disposition of those matters. I hope this letter is of some assistance. If you have any questions, or wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to contact me at (904) 827-5600 or [hmaltz@circuit7.org](mailto:hmaltz@circuit7.org).

Sincerely,



Howard M. Maltz

HMM/srn



Terence R. Perkins  
Chief Judge

STATE OF FLORIDA  
SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
S. James Foxman Justice Center  
251 N. Ridgewood Avenue FL 32114  
Phone: (386) 239-7792  
Fax: (386) 239-7795

April 17, 2017

Judicial Qualifications Commission  
c/o Rutledge R. Liles  
Liles Gavin  
301 W. Bay Street, Suite 1030  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

RE: Circuit Judge Scott DuPont

Dear Mr. Liles:

I am privileged to serve as Chief Judge of the Seventh Judicial Circuit. Prior to becoming a judge, I practiced law for over 30 years. Since coming to the bench, I met and have come to know my colleague and fellow Circuit Judge, Scott DuPont. Right from the start, Judge DuPont earned a reputation as an efficient judge in Putnam County doing family law. He works hard and diligently on all of his assignments. Although initially criticized for issues related to his demeanor and comportment, he worked hard on those issues and, as a result, has become a better and more patient judge.

After Judge DuPont was transferred from a family division to a civil division, his efficient handling of his civil docket resulted in his assignment to 2 civil divisions, located in separate counties. He now splits his time and duties between Putnam and Flagler counties. He mastered our court technology in short order and helped shape new court procedures in both counties. As a testament to his efficiency, he is one of just a few judges with an active caseload in more than 1 county. In addition, he has filled in on matters involving dependency and delinquency and has earned respect from clerks, law enforcement officers and others who serve our court. Judge DuPont is grounded in his faith and sets high moral standards for himself and others.

I am only somewhat familiar with the charges pending against Judge DuPont arising from his re-election in 2016. But, I am very aware of his contrition and remorse. In my opinion, he has learned from his mistakes and is a better judge today because of it.

Sincerely,

Terence R. Perkins  
Chief Judge

TRP:sdp

Rutledge R. Liles,  
301 West Bay St. Suite 1030  
Jacksonville, Florida 32202.

Re: Judicial Qualifications Commission

Mr. Rutledge R. Liles:

I am writing to provide my support on behalf of Honorable Scott Dupont, serving Circuit 7. Over the past several years I had the pleasure of working with Judge Dupont in his capacity of Family Court Judge in Putnam County Florida, particularly in the area of Injunctions for Protection.

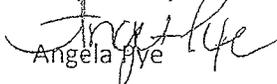
From 2012 – 2016, I served as the Executive Director of the Lee Conlee House in Palatka, Florida. The Lee Conlee House is the certified domestic violence center providing services to survivors of interpersonal violence in Putnam County. During my time of working with Judge Dupont I found him to be ethical, compassionate and fair. Judge Dupont demonstrated behaviors from the bench that I would like to see from all judges serving in this capacity. As a trainer on issues impacting survivors of domestic and sexual violence, I still provide examples in trainings of the innovative practices he implemented during his time on the bench hearing Injunction for Protection (IFP) cases in Putnam County. I only wish all judges would follow the path he set.

Judge Dupont was always open and available to hear from me and took my concerns over the issues impacting women and children in our community seriously. He implemented practices to ensure that his orders were followed by respondents and ensured that perpetrators of violence were held accountable in his court. He engaged our organization in Family Law Advisory Group meetings, supported our organization at fundraisers and even encourage fellow judges to get engaged with their shelters in their areas. Judge Dupont always remained ethical in his interactions from my perspective and while I may not have always agreed with every ruling, I always found him to be fair and concise in his decision making. And I do not believe anyone could ask for more.

While I do not have the pleasure of working with Judge Dupont directly right now I do hope that I get the opportunity again and would welcome him back to IFP/Family Law Court in any area I am serving.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or if I can be of any assistance.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Angela Hye

Former ED Lee Conlee House, Putnam County



Hineni Messianic Fellowship  
1797 Old Moultrie Rd., Ste 102  
St. Augustine, FL 32084  
(904) 827-9731

To The Judicial Qualifications Commission:

My name is John Beaird and I am Pastor Of Hineni Fellowship.

I am writing this letter on behalf of Judge Scott DuPont. Scott has been a member of our congregation for the past two years. In all the time that I have known Scott I can truthfully say that he has been an outstanding, honest example of christian character. I have spent time with Scott on different occasions and have found him to exhibit integrity, sincere faith and love for his fellow man.

I have found him to be compassionated towards and always willing to help others. He is trustworthy, honest and I would not hesitate to trust him to make sound and fair judgments. He has been a solid pillar in our congregation and I as a pastor feel blessed that he is part of our church. He is a man that I can feel blessed to call a true friend. At no time have I seen Scott make irresponsible judgments toward others, he has always been thoughtful and fair in all his actions. I have found Scott to always show concern and caring in his interactions with other members of our church. Scott is loved and respected by myself as well as everyone in our congregation.

Respectfully Yours,

*Pastor John Beaird*



James R. Clayton  
Circuit Judge

State of Florida  
Seventh Judicial Circuit  
Volusia County Courthouse Annex  
101 N. Alabama Avenue  
DeLand, Florida 32724  
Phone: (386) 740-5270  
Fax: (386) 822-5021

Angie Bernal  
Judicial Assistant

June 23, 2017

Judicial Qualifications Commission  
c/o Rutledge R. Liles, Liles Gavin PA  
301 West Bay Street, Suite 1030  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Re: Circuit Judge Scott C. DuPont (SC16-2103)

To Members of the Judicial Qualifications Commission:

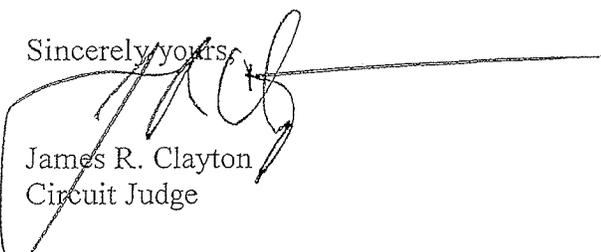
Please accept this letter as a recommendation on behalf of the Honorable Scott C. DuPont. I have known Scott on both a professional and personal level for many years and cannot speak highly enough of his qualifications as a Circuit Judge. I am aware of the charges that are pending against Judge DuPont and can say without any hesitation that he has learned from this mistake and is truly remorseful. Ironically, the pending charges have had a positive impact on Scott and he is now more empathetic and understanding to litigants, attorneys and court personnel.

Judge DuPont possesses the temperament and work ethic so vital to be an effective Circuit Judge. In a time when the judiciary is struggling with a severe identity and ethical crisis, it has always been refreshing to have the opportunity to know a person of Judge DuPont's unimpeachable integrity and knowledge of the law. Additionally, he possesses an excellent sense of humor.

Additionally, Judge Dupont is always willing to offer any assistance necessary when asked. In fact, there have been a few occasions when he has covered my docket for me in Volusia County.

Thank you for your time in considering this letter. Feel free to contact me with any questions regarding Judge DuPont.

Sincerely yours,

  
James R. Clayton  
Circuit Judge

JRC/ajb



July 6, 2017

Judicial Qualifications Commission  
c/o Rutledge R. Liles, Esq.  
Liles Gavin PA  
301 West Bay St., Suite 1030  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

Re: Circuit Judge Scott C. DuPont  
SC16-2103

To Members of the Judicial Qualifications Commission:

I write this letter to you as a reference or recommendation regarding the Honorable Scott C. DuPont. I have known Judge DuPont throughout his time in office subsequent to initial election in 2012 and assuming office in 2013. I can speak highly of Judge DuPont's integrity and dedication to his duties. He took over a Family Law caseload in Putnam County, Florida, which was significantly backed-up and behind time standards. He implemented a Case Management Conference system patterned after a successful system in St. Johns County. Although there was initial resistance to that change, it has proven beneficial to the Court system and, more importantly, to the citizens of Putnam County, Florida. Without doubt, Judge DuPont is the hardest working judge I have encountered.

Judge DuPont has recently been assigned to a civil docket in both Putnam and Flagler Counties. He has implemented the case management conference system in the civil divisions and it has produced further positive results in meeting time standards. Further, during the time of my recent medical issues, Judge DuPont willingly "stepped up to the plate" and assisted in my criminal docket for hearings and trials.

Judge DuPont takes his responsibilities as a judge very seriously. He does not see his job as just a job, but as an opportunity to serve.

I thank you for your consideration in this matter. Please contact me if there are any additional questions.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Clyde E. Wolfe".

Clyde E. Wolfe  
Circuit Judge

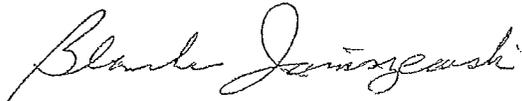
Bread of Life  
P. O. Box 1183  
Palatka, Florida 32178  
(386) 328-0213

April 21, 2017

About 5 years ago, Judge Scott duPont became involved with the Bread of Life, in Palatka, Florida where he volunteered during his lunch hour. Four years ago he was elected Board President and he served in that position until he decided to run for election. Judge duPont felt he could not give us the time as he had before and we sadly accepted his resignation.

Judge duPont is a caring and compassionate man who is deeply concerned about the situation with the homeless and less fortunate within our community. In spite of his many commitments, Judge duPont continues to volunteer at the Bread of Life whenever he is able and in any capacity possible.

Sincerely,



Blanche Janiszewski  
Cook and Manager



STATE OF FLORIDA  
SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT

Putnam County Courthouse  
Suite 303

410 St. Johns Avenue  
Palatka, Florida 32177

Patti A. Christensen  
Circuit Court Judge

Phone: (386) 329-0263  
Fax: (386) 329-0896

July 19, 2017

Dear Members of the JQC:

I am writing this letter on behalf of my colleague Judge Scott DuPont. We work together at the Putnam County Courthouse. In March 2016 we swapped divisions, so I am familiar with his work through various open files that I inherited from him. The files show that he is an efficient judge, making timely and consistent rulings. He is attuned to the various timelines required by the rules and makes the litigants comply with them. Because of this, he has shown excellent case management skills. He took an unwieldy family law docket and trimmed it down to something much more manageable. This has benefitted me, and the Clerk's office as well.

When we made the transition, he was generous with his time, guiding me through the substance and procedure of family law, juvenile delinquency, and truancy. During my 37 years as a lawyer and a judge, I have had little experience with these areas of the law. His instruction was helpful and insightful. He was patient and available to provide guidance when needed.

He started the Truancy court for Putnam County. At the time Putnam County had the worst education record in Florida. The numbers show that attendance, and grades, have improved since the Truancy court was initiated. He did not have to take on another docket, having full time work with his existing case load. But he saw a problem and set about to fix it. I am sure it will have lasting positive effects on the community with exponential returns in the long run.

Judge DuPont is diligent and a hard worker. He takes his assignments without complaints. During the last year, in addition to his work here in Putnam County, he has covered the civil docket in Flagler County. He did not initiate this split assignment but Flagler has benefited from his organization and case management skills.

I hope you will give favorable consideration to Judge DuPont in your deliberations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Patti A. Christensen".

Patti A. Christensen  
Circuit Judge



STATE OF FLORIDA  
SEVENTH JUDICIAL CIRCUIT  
County Court, Putnam County  
Putnam County Courthouse  
410 St. Johns Avenue, Suite 310  
Post Office Box 758  
Palatka, Florida 32178

Joe Boatwright  
County Court Judge

Phone: (386) 329-0269  
Fax: (386) 329-1229

July 20, 2017

Judicial Qualifications Commission  
C/O Rutledge R. Liles, Esq.  
Liles Gavin PA  
301 West Bay Street, Suite 1030  
Jacksonville, FL 32202

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter in reference for the Honorable Scott Dupont in response to a subpoena I received in regards to his proceedings before the Judicial Qualifications Commission (JQC). I have known Judge Dupont for a number of years during the time that I served as the Managing Assistant State Attorney in Putnam County and in my current position as a county court judge. In my time as the Managing Assistant State Attorney, Judge Dupont was always respectful and courteous to our attorneys and staff. In my experience as a county court judge, Judge Dupont has always been very collegial and respectful to the other judges in our county, and he has always been willing to help in any way possible. I know that he works very hard as he was previously assigned to a very large family law docket, and he now handles a civil docket in both Putnam and Flagler counties in which he seems to have managed very effectively.

Judge Dupont has implemented multiple programs within our judicial system. Through the family law division, he instituted a case management system and brought a certified batterer's intervention program to our county. In addition, he developed a truancy court which helped reduce truancy in our local schools.

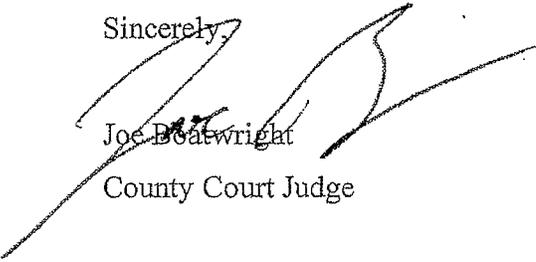
Judge Dupont is actively involved in the community through our local Police Athletic League, the Bread of Life, and his local church. He has lectured in our local schools in regards to

the court system and helped with a local high schools' mock trial program. Finally, he is a good husband to his wife Jackie and wonderful father to his newly adopted daughter, Sadie.

I have no personal knowledge of any of the allegations before the JQC that involve Judge DuPont's most recent election. In addition, I have never been in court with Judge Dupont, and as result, I cannot comment on his courtroom demeanor or any allegations of misconduct involving courtroom proceedings. Finally, as having no knowledge of these alleged incidents, I feel it would be inappropriate to give a recommendation as to any potential disposition in this matter.

I thank you for your consideration. Please contact me if there any additional questions.

Sincerely,



Joe Boatwright

County Court Judge