

**BEFORE THE FLORIDA
JUDICIAL QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION**

INQUIRY CONCERNING A JUDGE,
THE HONORABLE CLAUDIA ROBINSON
JQC NO. 2017-266

SC17- _____

STIPULATION

In this disciplinary proceeding, the Investigative Panel of the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission and Judge Claudia Robinson of the Broward County Court, present the following stipulation to this Court pursuant to Article V, Section 12 of the Florida Constitution, and Rule 6(j) of the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission's Rules ("FJQC Rules").

Under FJQC Rule 6(j), the Investigative Panel "may reach agreement with a judge on discipline or disability," and the Supreme Court has the discretion to accept or reject the terms of the Stipulation.

In this case, after reviewing the available evidence, and questioning the Respondent Judge under oath, the Investigative Panel has determined that probable cause exists to support the allegations brought forth in the Notice of Formal Charges filed concurrently with this Stipulation, and incorporated herewith by reference.

RECEIVED, 11/30/2017 05:33:27 PM, Clerk, Supreme Court

Judge Robinson, through her counsel, agrees that her conduct violated the canons by creating the appearance of impropriety and favoritism, and hereby submits this Stipulation together with the Commission, for the Court's review.

1. Judge Robinson largely self-funded her 2014 campaign for judicial office, and did not employ a paid campaign manager or consultant. However, attorney Michael Ahearn, a well-known political consultant, played a significant role in the campaign by serving as a volunteer consultant for Judge Robinson.
2. Upon taking office in 2015, Judge Robinson began appointing Mr. Ahearn to serve as a court-appointed mediator in small claims, and civil county court cases. Between April 2015 and March 2017, Judge Robinson ordered mediation in approximately 296 cases. Judge Robinson named Mr. Ahearn as the default mediator in 245 of those cases. Mr. Ahearn completed mediation in 174 of those cases, charging between \$250 and \$300 per hour, with a one hour minimum.
3. By appointing Mr. Ahearn as the default mediator in over 80% of her mediation orders, Judge Robinson created the appearance that the appointments were, in effect, pay back for Mr. Ahearn's services to Judge Robinson's campaign. Judge Robinson insists that there was no pre-arranged agreement for repayment to Mr. Ahearn with mediation work, and

that the appointments were based upon the quality of Mr. Ahearn's work. Mr. Ahearn also provided sworn testimony that there was no agreement for him to be reimbursed for campaign services with mediation work. Judge Robinson acknowledges, however, that her conduct, created the appearance of impropriety, and favoritism in the appointment process, in violation of the Canons.

4. Judge Robinson deeply regrets her error in judgment, and has expressed sincere remorse about the damage her conduct caused to the public's perception of the independence of the judiciary.
5. Judge Robinson also took steps to correct this appearance of impropriety when it was brought to her attention by a local news reporter. Since then, Judge Robinson has expanded the list of certified mediators to whom cases are referred.
6. Judge Robinson, again, sincerely apologizes to the Court, and to the citizens of Broward County, and fully accepts the Commission's Findings and Recommendation of Discipline being filed concurrently.
7. The parties acknowledge and understand that this Stipulation, and Findings and Recommendations of Discipline may be rejected by the Court, and in that event this matter may be returned to the Hearing Panel for a final plenary hearing. In such event, the parties agree that none of the statements

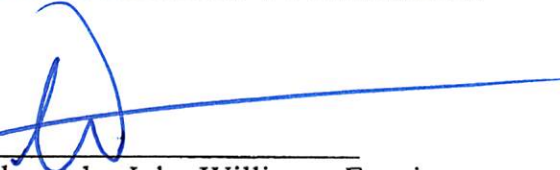
in the Stipulation (or the concurrently filed Findings and Recommendations of Discipline) are admissible in that hearing for any purpose. The parties further agree that none of the negotiations related to this Stipulation are admissible for any purpose.


8. The parties believe that oral argument before this Court is not necessary in light of the record, the nature of the charges, the contents of this Stipulation, and the attached Findings and Recommendation of Discipline. As previously noted, Judge Robinson waives her right to further hearings if they are accepted.

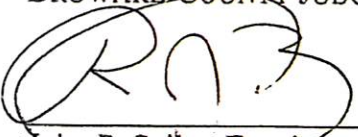
Dated this 30 day of November, 2017

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

By: _____


Alexander John Williams, Esquire
ASSISTANT GENERAL COUNSEL
TO THE FJQC
Florida Bar No. 99225
PO Box 14106
Tallahassee, FL 32317
(850) 488-1581
awilliams@floridajqc.com


Hon. Claudia Robinson
BROWARD COUNTY JUDGE


John P. Seiler, Esquire
Seiler, Sautter, Zaden, Rimes &
Wahlbrink
2850 North Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33311