

# Supreme Court of Florida

THURSDAY, MAY 28, 2020

CASE NO.: SC20-461

INQUIRY CONCERNING A JUDGE  
NO. 19-118

RE: KENNETH N. "SONNY"  
SCAFF, JR.

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Before the Court is the stipulation of the Judicial Qualifications Commission and Hamilton County Court Judge Kenneth Scaff. The Commission and Judge Scaff agree to the discipline of a public reprimand.

According to the stipulation, Judge Scaff admits that the conduct described in the Notice of Formal Charges occurred, including that Judge Scaff routinely conducted first appearances in a manner that did not comport with the requirements of Florida Rule of Criminal Procedure 3.130 or chapter 903, Florida Statutes, and engaged in improper ex-parte communications with defendants, witnesses, litigants, family members, and others regarding cases or matters pending, impending, or likely to come before the court.

Upon being presented with the Notice of Investigation, Judge Scaff took immediate responsibility for his conduct. He admits that his conduct was inappropriate and that it violated the Canons of Judicial Conduct. Judge Scaff has expressed great remorse and regrets that his failure to conduct first appearance hearings in accordance with the applicable rules of procedure and statutory law and his participation in ex-parte communications eroded the public confidence in the impartiality and integrity of the judiciary. Judge Scaff has since taken steps to ensure that such conduct is never again repeated, including locking the exterior door to his chambers to eliminate the ability of litigants or others to enter his office to attempt to speak with him about their cases; placing signage around the courthouse explaining that he is not permitted to speak with "any person about any court case"; setting a fixed time for conducting first appearances; and engaging with the Chief Judge of the circuit who will mentor and advise Judge Scaff as to issues that might arise while presiding over cases in such a small jurisdiction.

The stipulation is hereby approved. Judge Kenneth Scaff is ordered to appear before this Court for the administration of a public reprimand at a time to be set by the Clerk of this Court.

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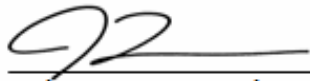
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NOT FINAL UNTIL TIME EXPIRES TO FILE REHEARING MOTION AND, IF  
FILED, DETERMINED.

CANADY, C.J., and POLSTON, LABARGA, LAWSON, and MUÑIZ, JJ., concur.

A True Copy

Test:



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John A. Tomasino  
Clerk, Supreme Court



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Served:

BRUCE W. ROBINSON

ALEXANDER J. WILLIAMS

HON. MARK EDWARD FEAGLE, CHIEF JUDGE