



**Indiana Judicial Nominating Commission
Indiana Commission on Judicial Qualifications**

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September 18, 2008

**PUBLIC ADMONITION OF
THE HONORABLE STEPHEN M. JESSUP
HOWARD SUPERIOR COURT 2**

The Indiana Commission on Judicial Qualifications has determined that formal disciplinary charges are warranted against the Honorable Stephen M. Jessup. However, in lieu of filing formal disciplinary proceedings, the Commission issues this Admonition pursuant to Supreme Court Admission and Discipline Rule 25 VIII E(7) and with the consent of Judge Jessup. Judge Jessup cooperated fully with the Commission in this matter and acknowledges he violated the Code of Judicial Conduct.

On April 28, 2008, Judge Jessup believed a Howard County deputy prosecutor had disregarded a demand from the judge in 2007 to notify the court if he would be unavailable for any court appearance; on April 28, the deputy's associate, also a deputy prosecutor, substituted for the assigned deputy in Judge Jessup's court, which is a common practice. Nonetheless, Judge Jessup became angry, left the courtroom, and walked to the courthouse office of the elected Prosecuting Attorney in an attempt to determine the whereabouts of the deputy. There, in the presence of at least three employees in that office, Judge Jessup made a personally and professionally damaging statement about the deputy prosecutor to the effect that he was "off popping pills" or "shooting drugs" or words to that effect. Judge Jessup has apologized to the deputy prosecutor and acknowledges he had no personal knowledge on which to base such a statement.

Judge Jessup also acknowledges that he violated the Code of Judicial Conduct which requires judges to uphold the integrity of the judiciary, to personally observe high standards of conduct, and to promote the public's confidence in the integrity of the judiciary.

Judge Jessup ordered the deputy prosecutor into court the following Monday and interrogated him about his absence the preceding Friday. During that proceeding, Judge Jessup's demeanor and temperament again fell far below the standards expected of judges, a fact he also acknowledges and for which he has expressed his regret.

The Commission now admonishes Judge Jessup for violating Canons 1, 2, and 3B(4) of the Code of Judicial Conduct. This Admonition concludes the Commission's

investigation, and Judge Jessup will not formally be charged with ethical misconduct in light of his consent to this admonition by the Commission.

Questions about this Admonition may be directed to Meg Babcock, Counsel for the Commission, at (317) 232-4706, or to Judge Jessup.