

State of Arizona
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT
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News Release

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT CENSURES JUSTICE OF THE PEACE

PHOENIX. The Commission on Judicial Conduct announced today that on June 26, 2015, the Arizona Supreme Court censured Justice of the Peace Larry A. Bravo for misconduct while in office. Judge Bravo is presently the justice of the peace for the Superior-Kearny Justice Court in Pinal County, and also serves as the magistrate for the Town of Hayden.

In 2012, a litigant who had appeared in Judge Bravo's court on two prior cases acquired a mining claim in his name and Judge Bravo's name. Although he initially placed Judge Bravo's name on the mining claim without the judge's knowledge, he later disclosed this interest to Judge Bravo. In 2012 and 2013, this litigant appeared before Judge Bravo as a plaintiff in two separate protective order proceedings. Judge Bravo did not disclose his relationship or joint property ownership with this litigant to the other party in the protective order proceedings.

The court's decision was based on a stipulated resolution between disciplinary counsel and the judge, in which the judge did not contest that his conduct, as described in the stipulated resolution, violated Rules 1.2, 2.4(C), 2.9(A), 2.11(A), 2.11(B), 3.13(A), 3.13(C), and 3.15 of the Arizona Code of Judicial Conduct. Additionally, the judge's actions constituted conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute, a violation of Article 6.1, Section 4, of the Arizona Constitution.

Rule 1.2 requires a judge to "act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the independence, integrity, and impartiality of the judiciary," and to "avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety." Rule 2.4(C) provides that "a judge shall not convey or permit others to convey the impression that any person or organization is in a position to influence the judge." Rule 2.9(A) requires that a judge "shall not initiate, permit, or consider ex parte communications, or consider other communications made to the judge

outside the presence of the parties or their lawyers, concerning a pending or impending matter.” Rule 2.11(A) provides that a judge “shall disqualify himself or herself in any proceeding in which the judge’s impartiality might be questioned.” Rule 2.11(B) requires a judge to “keep reasonably informed about the judge’s personal and fiduciary economic interests.” Rule 3.13(A) provides that a judge is not to “accept any gifts, loans, bequests, benefits, or other things of value, if acceptance is prohibited by law or would appear to a reasonable person to undermine the judge’s independence, integrity, or impartiality.” Finally, Rule 3.13(C) requires a judge to “report the acceptance of any gift, loan, bequest, or other thing of value as required by Rule 3.15.” Both the hearing officer appointed to hear the formal charges against the judge and the Commission on Judicial Conduct recommended the court approve the stipulated resolution.

The commission is an independent state agency with disciplinary jurisdiction over all state and local judges. It is comprised of six judges, two attorneys, and three public members. The commission investigates complaints and submits recommendations in formal cases to the Arizona Supreme Court for final decision.

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