

State of Arizona
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT
1501 W. Washington St., Suite 229
Phoenix, Arizona 85007
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News Release

ARIZONA SUPREME COURT CENSURES SUPERIOR COURT JUDGE

PHOENIX. The Commission on Judicial Conduct announced today that on June 15, 2018, the Arizona Supreme Court censured Mohave County Superior Court Judge Lee F. Jantzen for misconduct while in office.

On March 31, 2015, Leroy Montoya filed a second/successive petition for post-conviction relief in one of his criminal matters that was assigned to Judge Jantzen. The state's response and Mr. Montoya's subsequent reply were all promptly filed. Thereafter, Mr. Montoya submitted multiple pleadings and letters inquiring when the court would rule on his petition. On October 21, 2016, Judge Jantzen held a status conference in Mr. Montoya's case, and the fact that he had not yet issued a ruling on the petition filed on March 31, 2015 was discussed. Respondent still had not ruled on Mr. Montoya's pending petition and other matters at the time Mr. Montoya filed his initial complaint with the commission in August 2017. In his response to the initial complaint in November 2017, Judge Jantzen admitted the rulings had not been made, and he recused from Mr. Montoya's cases. From June 30, 2015 through September 30, 2017, Judge Jantzen signed payroll certifications pursuant to A.R.S. §12-128.01, which falsely certified that he had no matters under submission that were pending and undetermined for more than sixty days.

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 1.1, 1.2, and 2.5(A) of the Arizona Code of Judicial Conduct, Rule 32.6(c) of the Arizona Rules of Criminal Procedure, Article 2, Section 11 of the Arizona Constitution, and Article 6, Section 21 of the Arizona Constitution. 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. The Commission on Judicial Conduct recommended the court approve the stipulated resolution.

The public record in this matter is available on the commission's website via the following link: <http://www.azcourts.gov/portals/137/reports/2017/17-232.pdf>.

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.

For more information, contact

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