

State of Arizona
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

Disposition of Complaint 12-178

Complainant: Self-report

Judge: Jeanette Umphress

ORDER

Yuma Municipal Court Judge Jeanette Umphress self-reported to the commission that she violated Rule 4.1(A)(1) of the Arizona Code of Judicial Conduct by continuing to serve as the secretary of her local Republican Women's group after she took office as a municipal court judge. Rule 4.1(A)(1) provides that a judge shall not act as a leader in, or hold an office in, a political organization. A "political organization" for the purpose of this rule means a political party or other group sponsored by or affiliated with a political party or candidate, the principal purpose of which is to further the election or appointment of candidates for political office. Judge Umphress indicated she first became aware of her violation after attending a program entitled "Judicial Elections – Do's and Don'ts" at the 2012 Arizona Judicial Conference in June. She immediately resigned her office in the group upon learning of the prohibition against so serving. New judges are urged at new judges training to read the Code of Judicial Conduct. Judge Umphress attended such a training session early in 2012.

The commission commends Judge Umphress for immediately resigning from the position in question upon determining the rule prohibited her from holding it and for taking the initiative in self-reporting the violation to the commission. The commission is confident she is now fully aware of the restrictions on political activity by judges as set forth in Canon 4 of the Code. The commission must nevertheless reprimand Judge Umphress for violating Rule 4.1(A)(1) pursuant to Commission Rule 17(a), and the record in this case, consisting of Judge Umphress' self-report and this order shall be made public as required by Commission Rule 9(a).

Dated: August 21, 2012.

FOR THE COMMISSION

/s/ Louis Dominguez

Louis Frank Dominguez
Commission Chair

A copy of this order was mailed to the Judge on August 21, 2012.

This order may not be used as a basis for disqualification of a judge.

2012-178

JUN 28 2012

MUNICIPAL COURT

1515 S. Second Avenue
Yuma, Arizona 85364



City of YUMA

June 27, 2012

State of Arizona
Commission on Judicial Conduct
1501 W. Washington Street, Suite 229
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Re: self reporting of a violation of the Judicial Canons

Commission members,

I was recently in Tucson, Arizona at the annual judges' conference where I discovered that I was not in compliance with one of the Judicial Canons (Canon 4 Rule 4.1 A 1). I was attending a class regarding the do's and don'ts of judicial campaigning when it came to my attention that it is a violation of Canon 4 for a judge or judicial candidate to hold an office in a political organization. I was the secretary of the Rio Colorado Republican Women's group in Yuma, Arizona from January of 2012 until my resignation on June 25, 2012. I was unaware that this was a violation, and immediately upon gaining this information, I called the president of the group and advised her of my resignation. A copy of my letter of resignation is attached.

I apologize for my misconduct and await your decision in this matter.

Respectfully,

Jeanette Umphress
Judge Yuma Municipal Court

Cc: Douglas Stanley
Presiding Judge Yuma Municipal Court