

**IN THE SUPREME COURT
STATE OF FLORIDA**

**INQUIRY CONCERNING A JUDGE,
THE HONORABLE WOODY CLERMONT
JQC NO. 2025-398**

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FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF DISCIPLINE

Procedural History

In May 2025, the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission (the “JQC”) served a Notice of Investigation on Broward County Judge Woody Clermont, pursuant to Rule 6(b) of the Florida Judicial Qualification Commission Rules (“FJQC Rules”). On June 6, and July 8, 2025, Judge Clermont appeared before the Investigative Panel of the Commission with counsel, and provided testimony under oath, in response to the Notice of Investigation. During these hearings, Judge Clermont admitted that his conduct with regard to the violations, occurring on April 11, 2025, as described in the Notice of Formal Charges, fell short of the high standards required by the Code of Judicial Conduct, and at the conclusion of the hearings, the Investigative Panel voted to find probable cause and proceed with the institution of formal charges, pursuant to FJQC Rule 6(f).

The Canons

Canon 1 of the Code of Judicial Conduct provides that “[a] Judge Shall Uphold the Integrity and Independence of the Judiciary.”

Canon 2 requires that a judge shall “Avoid Impropriety and the Appearance of Impropriety in all of the Judge’s Activities.” Canon 2 further requires:

- A. A judge shall respect and comply with the law and act in a manner that promotes public confidence in the judiciary.
- B. A judge shall not allow family, social, political or other relationships to influence the judge’s judicial conduct or judgment. A judge shall not lend the prestige of judicial office to advance the private interests of the judge or others; nor shall a judge convey or permit others to convey the impression that they are in a special position to influence the judge. A judge shall not testify voluntarily as a character witness.

Canon 5G provides that a “judge shall not practice law.”

Factual Findings

In April 2025, as detailed in the Notice of Formal Charges, Judge Clermont appeared on behalf of a personal friend who had been arrested on

a domestic violence charge. While present at his friend's first appearance, Judge Clermont acted as an attorney by advocating on behalf of the defendant and created the appearance of impropriety by providing character testimony, lending the prestige of his judicial office to advance the private interests of another.

By his self-report to the Commission and his sworn oral testimony before the Investigative Panel, and by the execution of a Stipulation filed concurrently with these Findings and Recommendations, Judge Clermont has agreed to and admitted the facts and circumstances described in the Notice of Formal Charges, and in these Findings, and he has agreed that his actions constitute violations of Canons 1, 2A, 2B and 5G of the Code of Judicial Conduct. Finally, he has agreed that these charges are supported by clear and convincing evidence, and that he should receive the recommended discipline.

Therefore, in light of Judge Clermont's admissions, and the Commission's own investigation, the Commission finds that Judge Clermont violated Canons 1, 2A, 2B and 5G through the course of conduct described in the Notice of Formal Charges, and that these findings are supported by clear and convincing evidence.

Mitigation

Judge Clermont admitted to his misconduct and has cooperated with the Commission in all respects during this inquiry. Judge Clermont explained that he was not wearing his judicial robe when he went to the courtroom, and did not specifically identify himself as a judge to anyone other than the bailiff who inquired about Judge Clermont's courthouse ID. Through its own investigation, the Commission learned that the bailiff noted Judge Clermont's judicial status in a note that was provided to the judge presiding over the first appearance. Additionally, the Assistant State Attorney representing the prosecution at the First Appearance hearing stated that even though Judge Clermont did not identify himself as a judge, the prosecutor knew Clermont was a judge by virtue of the fact that Clermont had recently been sworn in as a judge in the same county. And finally, the presiding judge knew of Judge Clermont's judicial status when he observed Judge Clermont present in the first appearance courtroom.

The Commission has no evidence that the prosecutor's decision to lower his bond recommendation to a non-monetary release with conditions, nor the presiding judge's decision to impose the bond agreed to by the prosecutor and Judge Clermont on behalf of the defendant was directly influenced by the Respondent's judicial status.

However, the Commission believes the appearance of impropriety in this case is strong. So strong, in fact, that the presiding judge at the first appearance immediately reported the incident to other judges, who, in turn, informed Judge Clermont that he should report himself to the Commission, which he did.

Judge Clermont has expressed deep regret that his conduct could have eroded the public's perception of the integrity of the judiciary. He hopes to rectify this, in part, by taking responsibility for his misconduct, and accepting the sanction.

Recommendation as to Discipline


Judge Clermont and the Commission have entered into a Stipulation, recommending that this Court issue a public reprimand. The Commission believes that this sanction will be sufficient to deter such behavior by Judge Clermont in the future, and to remind the judiciary of the requirements of Canons 1, 2 and 5 of the Code of Judicial Conduct.

Accordingly, the Commission finds and recommends that the interests of justice, the public welfare, and sound judicial administration will be well served by public reprimand of Judge Clermont.

Dated this 20th day of August 2025.

**THE FLORIDA JUDICIAL
QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION**

By: _____



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