

**IN THE SUPREME COURT  
STATE OF FLORIDA**

INQUIRY CONCERNING A JUDGE,  
THE HONORABLE JOHN JORDAN  
JQC NOS. 2025-553, 2025-845

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**FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF DISCIPLINE**

**Procedural History**

In October 2025, the Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission (the “JQC”) served a Notice of Investigation on Ninth Circuit Judge John Jordan, pursuant to Rule 6(b) of the JQC Rules. On October 24, 2025, Judge Jordan appeared before the Investigative Panel of the Commission, with counsel, and provided testimony under oath in response to the Notice of Investigation. During that hearing, Judge Jordan admitted that his conduct occurring in April and July 2025, as described in the Notice of Formal Charges, violated the high standards required by the Code of Judicial Conduct. At the conclusion of the hearing, the Investigative Panel voted to find probable cause and proceed with formal charges pursuant to JQC Rule 6(f).

**The Charges**

The Investigative Panel found probable cause regarding Judge Jordan’s intemperate behavior and inappropriate commentary in violation of

Canons 1, 2A, 3B(4) and 3B(5) of the Code of Judicial Conduct. At all times material hereto, Judge Jordan was a Circuit Court Judge in the Ninth Judicial Circuit of Florida.

JQC Case No. 2025-553

On April 9, 2025, during jury selection, outside the presence of the jury, for Case No. 2023-CF-13310 (an aggravated battery case), Judge Jordan unprofessionally scolded two public defenders in a manner that that was not patient, dignified or courteous.

Seemingly annoyed that the public defenders did not confer with their client regarding potential challenges to the prospective jurors during the lunch break, Judge Jordan sarcastically inquired:

THE COURT: How much time do you need? Can I get you something to eat? Something to drink?

When the public defenders (PD #1 and PD #2) complained that they were being unfairly treated and rushed, Judge Jordan—in a raised voice (as reflected in the trial’s audio recording)—ordered the public defenders three times to “Shut up”:

THE COURT: Shut up.

PD#2: Okay.

PD#1: That is rude.

THE COURT: Shut up.

PD #1: No. That is very rude.

THE COURT: Shut up. I'm not going to listen to two people arguing. I'll listen to one. Okay?

PD #1 subsequently moved for a mistrial and *ore tenus* to disqualify Judge Jordan based on his inappropriate behavior toward the attorneys. Judge Jordan immediately denied both motions.

Judge Jordan's impatient, undignified, and discourteous behavior towards counsel continued at the end of the proceedings when, in response to one of the public defenders describing Judge Jordan's unprofessional tone during the earlier conflict, Judge Jordan abruptly halted the proceedings at his own volition:

THE COURT: Okay. So, your sarcastic remark is noted. And that's not how it went down, but I understand what is going on. I'm declaring a mistrial and we'll get another judge for you.

ASSISTANT STATE ATTORNEY: Your honor?

THE COURT: No. I'm done. I'm not going to deal with this pettiness like this.

Judge Jordan declared a mistrial and the proceedings were then concluded. On April 21, 2025, Judge Marques signed and filed an Order of

Recusal that had been previously delivered by Judge Jordan, reassigning the case that same day.

JQC Case No. 2025-845

On July 28, 2025, Judge Jordan presided over a plea hearing in a felony battery case involving a 33-year-old black female defendant. This was a negotiated plea where the defendant and state agreed that the defendant would complete 30 hours of community service. While discussing possible sanctions with the defendant and her great-uncle (who is also black) who was present at the plea hearing, Judge Jordan inquired:

THE COURT: Sure. [great-uncle] do you own any land where I could have her work it for 30 hours?

[GREAT-UNCLE]: (Laughing)

THE COURT: All my family's farming. They'd love me out there. You ever—You ever chopped cotton before? You know what that is? You take a hoe and you knock out the weeds. That'll—That'll straighten you up real quick doing that stuff.<sup>1</sup>

All right. Well, no pulling weeds for your great-uncle then. So, let's move on.

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<sup>1</sup> Judge Jordan explained to the panel that he comes from a farming background where he spent summers in his youth working his relatives farm fields in Texas.

Upon questioning by the Panel, Judge Jordan acknowledged that this was the first and only time he has ever inquired whether a person appearing before him had ever “chopped cotton.” Judge Jordan also acknowledged that his questions and comments in this instance were ill-considered. In particular, Judge Jordan acknowledges that he failed to consider how his comments, as a judge considering whether to order a black defendant to “work the land,” immediately followed by a reference to “chopping cotton,” could have been interpreted (and indeed were interpreted) as inappropriate, especially in light of the historically demeaning stereotype associating black people with picking cotton.

Highlighting the Commission’s concern, along with acknowledging this was the first time he had ever asked a person in court whether they had ever “chopped cotton,” Judge Jordan had no insight as to why he had suggested such possible action as discipline in this instance, as opposed to working at a business, volunteering at a charity, or performing other community service.

The judge’s closing admonition, that the defendant would be “straighten[ed]... up real quick” by such a method of discipline, only enhances the inappropriate tenor of the comments.

Judge Jordan insists that he is not a racist, and does not make rulings or decisions improperly based on race, and the Commission has no evidence that such has occurred. If the Commission had such evidence, then the Commission would be making a far different recommendation of far more severe sanctions, up to and including removal from office.

However, the Commission remains concerned that Judge Jordan failed to grasp in the moment, or in the days thereafter, how his words clearly were inappropriate. He further admits that his comments were not dignified, could lessen the public's perception of the judiciary, and could weaken the public's confidence that the justice being meted out by the judicial branch is based only the facts and the law, and not a person's race.

Finally, the Commission notes that following the April 9, 2025 incident with the public defenders during jury selection, Judge Jordan was cautioned by an administrative judge about the need to be more measured in his interactions and not to make comments that are discourteous, undignified, and impatient. Yet the second incident happened just a few months later, culminating in the Commission's concern about a pattern of misconduct involving a judge who reacts or makes off-hand comments which fail to uphold the high standard of conduct required of judges.

## **Factual Findings**

By his written response to the Notice of Investigation, his sworn oral testimony before the Investigative Panel, and by the execution of a Stipulation filed concurrently with these Findings and Recommendation, Judge Jordan has agreed to and admitted the facts and circumstances described in the Notice of Formal Charges, and in these Findings, and he agrees that his actions constitute violations on Canons 1, 2A, 3B(4) and 3B(5) of the Code of Judicial Conduct. He agrees that these charges are supported by clear and convincing evidence, and that the recommended discipline should be imposed.

Therefore, considering Judge Jordan's admissions, and the Commission's investigation, the Commission finds that Judge Jordan violated Canons 1, 2A, 3B(4) and 3B(5) through the conduct described above, and that these Findings are supported by clear and convincing evidence.

## **Mitigation**

Judge Jordan admitted to his misconduct and has cooperated with the Commission in all respects during its inquiry. He has expressed deep regret and embarrassment that his conduct could have eroded the public's

perception of the integrity of the judiciary. Further, in an effort to demonstrate his having established a well-respected reputation in the community at large, and in the black community specifically, Judge Jordan submitted to the Investigative Panel his receipt of letters of commendation, awards, and a 2011 invitation to join the college of law advisory committee at Florida A&M University—a well-known historically black college or university (HBCU).

Although such examples are helpful in evaluating Judge Jordan’s assurance that he does not discriminate based on race, the Commission does not believe that such examples adequately address or offset the central issues of his undignified conduct and inappropriate off-the-cuff commentary described above. Judge Jordan hopes to rectify his misconduct by taking responsibility for his misconduct and accepting the sanction.

**Recommendation as to Discipline**

Judge Jordan and the Commission have entered into a Stipulation recommending that Judge Jordan receive a public reprimand. The Commission believes that this sanction will serve to deter Judge Jordan’s misconduct in the future and serve as an example and reminder to the judiciary about the high standard of courtroom decorum and behavior expected of judges.

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

Dated this 23rd day of March 2026.

**THE FLORIDA JUDICIAL  
QUALIFICATIONS COMMISSION**

By: */s/ Gregory Coleman*  
Gregory W. Coleman  
Chair of the JQC  
PO Box 14106  
Tallahassee, FL 32317