

Supreme Court of Florida

No. SC2025-0278

**INQUIRY CONCERNING A JUDGE JQC NO. 2024-796
RE: MARTHA CANNON ADAMS.**

May 8, 2025

PER CURIAM.

The Judicial Qualifications Commission has filed with our Court a Stipulation and Findings and Recommendations of Discipline to resolve a charge against Orange County Judge Martha Adams. The parties agree that Judge Adams violated the Canons of Judicial Conduct through “biased, impatient, undignified, and discourteous behavior [toward] the staff and management of the Ninth Circuit State Attorney’s Office.” The parties further agree that Judge Adams should be disciplined by the imposition of a public reprimand. We accept the stipulation and findings and will impose the recommended discipline. *See* art. V, § 12(c)(1), Fla. Const. (allowing the Court to accept, reject, or modify the Commission’s findings and recommendations).

The parties agree that, while presiding over criminal cases in her court, Judge Adams directed rude and intemperate comments at members of the State Attorney's Office. She called one assistant state attorney an "ass"; talked about making the life of one State Attorney's Office employee "a shambles"; and said that the State Attorney's Office was conspiring to remove her from the bench and that therefore she would have to start "being a 'bitch' " in her rulings. We accept the Commission's conclusion that these actions violated Canons 1, 2A, 3B(4), and 3B(5) of the Code of Judicial Conduct. Aside from generally requiring judges to uphold the integrity of the courts, these canons demand that judges treat parties respectfully and impartially.

Judge Adams' comments are well outside the bounds of what is acceptable for members of our judiciary. In many cases, adequate discipline for such behavior would require more than a public reprimand. The record shows, though, that Judge Adams had a clean disciplinary record throughout her seventeen years of prior judicial service and that she had no other complaints of this nature. The Commission also found that Judge Adams has expressed deep regret and apologized in writing to the individuals

directly affected by her misconduct. We accept the Commission's determination that, given this mitigation, discipline short of a suspension is sufficient.

For all these reasons, we approve the Stipulation and Findings and Recommendations of Discipline in this matter. Judge Adams is hereby ordered to appear before this Court for the administration of a public reprimand at a time to be established by the Clerk of this Court.

It is so ordered.

MUÑIZ, C.J., and CANADY, LABARGA, COURIEL, FRANCIS, and SASSO, JJ., concur.
GROSSHANS, J., recused.

NOT FINAL UNTIL TIME EXPIRES TO FILE REHEARING MOTION
AND, IF FILED, DETERMINED.

Original Proceeding – Judicial Qualifications Commission

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Hugh R. Brown, Assistant General Counsel, Tallahassee, Florida,

for Florida Judicial Qualifications Commission, Petitioner

Thomas D. Sommerville, Orlando, Florida,

for Judge Martha Cannon Adams, Respondent