



NEW YORK STATE
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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NEWS RELEASE

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Chenango County Town Justice Should Be Removed for Inappropriate Sexual Comments and Other Serious Misconduct

The New York State Commission on Judicial Conduct has determined that Jeremy L. Persons, a Justice of the Guilford Town Court, Chenango County, should be removed from office for making inappropriate sexual comments in court and in chambers, and for engaging in numerous other acts of misconduct.

The Commission found that Judge Persons:

- Made sexually charged comments to and about attorneys appearing in his court.
 - Judge Persons told two attorneys that he had a three-way relationship with his ex-wife and another woman, but the two women cut him out of the relationship. Referring to his ex-wife, he commented, “She likes the hole better than the pole.”
 - He told an Assistant Public Defender that he would “like to watch [her] golf,” and when she said she was not good at golf, replied “that’s not why I want to watch you.”
 - He told the Public Defender that he was looking forward to the return of the Assistant Public Defender and said, “She’s better looking than [you].”

- Displayed the following bumper stickers on his car which he typically parked near the non-public entrance to the court, where it was visible to police officers and/or defendants in custody:
 - A bumper sticker that read, “Boobies Make Me Smile.”
 - A graphic of “Judge Dredd,” referring to the fictional character known as “judge, jury and executioner.”
- Failed to respond and appear on traffic tickets resulting in two suspensions of his driver’s license. The judge also failed to renew his car insurance which also resulted in the suspension of his driver’s license.
- In eventually responding to his traffic tickets, gave the court clerk his @nycourts.gov email address, which resulted in the court clerk making a notation on his file that he was “a judge at Guilford, NY.”
- Carried his handgun in a hip-holster which was easily visible when he was not wearing his judicial robe, notwithstanding that his pistol permit required the pistol to be concealed. Additionally, on one occasion the judge placed his handgun on the bench when a public defender was appearing before him.
- Failed to file required monthly reports with the State Comptroller in a timely manner, which resulted in his salary being stopped.
- Failed to cooperate with a subsequent Office of Court Administration audit of his court records, which resulted in an order that all his pending cases be assigned to another judge and no new cases be assigned to him.
- Failed to cooperate during the Commission’s investigation and proceedings.

In its removal decision, the Commission said:

[Judge Persons] violated the [Rules](#) when he behaved in an undignified manner by making inappropriate comments to and about attorneys appearing before him; engaged in a pattern of failing to comply with the law; invoked his judicial office in connection with a personal matter and failed to cooperate with OCA and the Town of Guilford in the investigation of his judicial conduct. His underlying misconduct was significantly exacerbated when he chose to ignore the Commission’s proceedings.

Judge Persons, who is not an attorney, has served as a Justice of the Guilford Town Court since 2020. His current term expires on December 31, 2023.

Statement by Commission Administrator

Commission Administrator Robert H. Tembeckjian made the following statement.

“Judge Persons committed a remarkable array of misconduct, warranting his removal from the bench. In court, judges must set an example of civility and propriety. In public, they must respect and abide by the laws they enforce on others. Judge Persons did neither. His offensive sexual comments in court, the gratuitous displays of a firearm, his failure to account for court funds, the disregard of his own traffic tickets, and his failure to cooperate with investigating entities – demonstrated his unfitness for judicial office.”

The Commission Proceedings

Judge Persons was served with a Formal Written Complaint dated July 13, 2022, containing seven charges. He did not file an Answer.

By motion dated November 4, 2022, the Administrator moved for summary determination. The judge did not submit a response. The motion was granted on December 15, 2022, determining that the factual allegations of the Complaint were sustained and that the judge’s misconduct was established.

Counsel to the Commission filed a brief arguing for the judge’s removal and waived oral argument unless the judge was to appear. The judge did not make a submission on the issue of sanction, respond to the administrator’s brief or appear for oral argument.

The Commission Determination

The Commission filed a determination dated February 23, 2023, in which all 10 members concurred: Joseph W. Belluck, Esq. (the Commission Chair), Taa Grays, Esq., (the Vice Chair), Hon. Fernando M. Camacho, Jodie Corngold¹, Judge John A. Falk, Judge Robert J. Miller, Marvin Ray Raskin, Esq., Ronald J. Rosenberg, Esq., Graham B. Seiter, Esq., and Akosua Garcia Yeboah.

There are currently two vacancies on the Commission.

¹ Ms. Corngold’s term as a member of the Commission ended on March 31, 2023. Her position is currently vacant.

Court of Appeals Review

The Commission transmitted its determination to the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals, pursuant to Judiciary Law Section 44, subdivision 7. Judge Persons received it on April 6, 2023, and the Commission was subsequently notified by the Court of Appeals that service was complete. Consequently, the matter is now public.

A judge may either accept the Commission's determination or, within 30 days from receipt, make a written request to the Chief Judge for a review of the determination by the Court of Appeals.

Pursuant to Judiciary Law Section 44, subdivision 7, if Judge Persons does not request review by the Court of Appeals, the Court of Appeals will remove him in accordance with the determination.

If a Commission determination is reviewed by the Court of Appeals, the Court may accept the determined sanction, impose a different sanction including admonition, censure or removal, or impose no sanction.

Statistics Relating to Prior Determinations

Since 1978, the Commission has issued 179 determinations of removal against judges in New York State. The Commission has issued 347 determinations of censure and 281 determinations of admonition.

The Court of Appeals has reviewed 101 Commission determinations. The Court accepted the Commission's sanctions in 85 cases (76 of which were removals, six were censures and three were admonitions). Of the remaining 16 cases, two sanctions were increased from censure to removal, and 13 were reduced: nine removal determinations were modified to censure, one removal was modified to admonition, two censures were modified to admonition, and one censure was rejected and the charges dismissed. The Court remitted one matter to the Commission for further proceedings. One request for review is currently pending.

Counsel

In the proceedings before the Commission, Judge Persons represented himself.

The Commission was represented by Deputy Administrator Cathleen S. Cenci, Staff Attorney Shruti Joshi and Senior Investigator Ryan Fitzpatrick.

Background Information on Judge Persons

First Took Office: 2020
 Current Term Expires: December 31, 2023

Members of the Commission

The Commission members serve four-year terms. A list of members is appended.

The Public File

The determination is attached. The record of the proceedings upon which the determination is based is available for inspection by appointment during regular business hours at the Commission's three offices:

61 Broadway Suite 1200 New York, New York 10006	Corning Tower, Suite 2301 Empire State Plaza Albany, New York 12223	400 Andrews Street Suite 700 Rochester, New York 14604
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MEMBERS OF THE STATE COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

Member	Appointing Authority	Term End
Joseph W. Belluck, Esq., Chair	Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2024
Taa Grays, Esq., Vice Chair	Senate President Pro Tem Andrea Stewart-Cousins	March 31, 2027
Hon. Fernando M. Camacho	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2024
Hon. John A. Falk	Chief Judge Janet DiFiore	March 31, 2025
Hon. Robert J. Miller	Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2026
Marvin Ray Raskin, Esq.	Assembly Speaker Carl E. Heastie	March 31, 2026
Ronald J. Rosenberg, Esq.	Former Senate Minority Leader John J. Flanagan	March 31, 2024
Graham B. Seiter, Esq.	Assembly Minority Leader William A. Barclay	March 31, 2025
Akosua Garcia Yeboah	Former Governor Andrew M. Cuomo	March 31, 2025