



## STATE OF TENNESSEE BOARD OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT

November 15, 2023

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BOARD OF JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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Judge John R. Rosson  
C/O Charles C. Burks, Jr., Esq.  
Burks & Ogle  
800 South Gay St., Suite 1900  
Knoxville, TN 37929

RE: Public Reprimand  
File Nos. B23-9468 and B23-9479

Dear Judge Rosson:

This letter shall serve as a public reprimand pursuant to Tennessee Code Annotated section 17-5-303(e)(2)(B)(i)(c).

On October 11, 2023, you held a campaign event in your courtroom to which the media were invited. During the event, you stood in front of your bench and accepted an endorsement from a lawyer. You also announced an endorsement from another lawyer who was not present. You further announced that you could make a “campaign speech” and proceeded to do so. As part of your remarks, you asked those who would see the press conference on television or elsewhere to vote for you. In addition, you took election-related questions from media representatives, including questions about your opponent.

The ethics rules are clear that a judge may not “make inappropriate use of *court premises*, staff, stationery, equipment, or other resources.” Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 10, RJC 3.1(E) (emphasis added). In addition, the rules provide that a judge “shall not abuse the prestige of judicial office to advance the personal or economic interests of the judge or others, or allow others to do so.” Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 10, RJC 1.3. Judges are also required to “act all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the independence, integrity, and impartiality of

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the judiciary, and shall avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety.” Tenn. Sup. Ct. R. 10, RJC. 1.2.

As an experienced judge with thirty-six years on the bench, you should have known that it was improper to hold a campaign event in your courtroom. In doing so, you leveraged judicial office for your own purposes, something the ethics rules prohibit. As a result, the investigative panel decided to impose a public reprimand, which you have accepted. In imposing this sanction, the panel considered in mitigation that you have taken full responsibility, have offered no excuses for your actions, and have no disciplinary history as a judge.

The Board trusts that the reprimand imposed today will result in an elevated consciousness regarding your ethical obligations as a judge and the standards to which all judges and judicial candidates must adhere when campaigning for office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "G. Andrew Brigham". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "G" and "A".

G. Andrew Brigham  
Board Chair