



**BEFORE THE STATE COMMISSION
ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

CJC No. 14-1037-AP

PUBLIC ADMONITION

**HONORABLE NORA LONGORIA
JUSTICE, THIRTEENTH COURT OF APPEALS
EDINBURG, HIDALGO COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting on February 18-20, 2015, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct concluded a review of allegations against the Honorable Nora Longoria, Justice on the Thirteenth Court of Appeals in Edinburg, Hidalgo County, Texas. Judge Longoria was advised by letter of the Commission's concerns and provided written responses. After considering the evidence before it, the Commission entered the following Findings and Conclusion:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Honorable Nora Longoria was a Justice on the Thirteenth Court of Appeals in Edinburg, Hidalgo County, Texas.
2. On or about July 12, 2014, Justice Longoria was stopped by a McAllen police officer for allegedly driving 69 mph in a posted 55 mph zone.
3. During the traffic stop, the officer asked the judge to exit her vehicle and perform a field sobriety test because he detected the odor of alcohol emitting from the judge's breath and observed that her speech was slurred.
4. When the officer inquired if she had been drinking any alcoholic beverages that evening, Justice Longoria advised him that she had consumed "about five beers."
5. After being informed that she had failed the field sobriety test, Justice Longoria was placed under arrest.
6. When the officer attempted to place her handcuffs, however, Justice Longoria became emotional and uncooperative, demanding that a supervisor come to the scene.

7. Justice Longoria was eventually handcuffed and transported to the McAllen Police Department, where she was charged with driving while intoxicated and released on a \$2,000 recognizance bond.
8. Justice Longoria's arrest for allegedly driving while intoxicated received local media attention.
9. On November 20, 2014, Justice Longoria entered a plea of no contest to a speeding charge and paid a \$500 fine; the driving while intoxicated charge was dismissed.
10. The dismissal of the charge against the judge received widespread local and national media attention, which included the release of the police officer's dash cam video recording of the judge's traffic stop and arrest on the Internet.
11. The McAllen Police Department provided a copy of the dash cam video recording to the Commission, which revealed, among other things, that Justice Longoria (a) repeatedly identified herself as a judge and offered to show her judicial badge to the officers without being asked for that information; (b) repeatedly pleaded with the officer not to arrest her, to issue her a warning, and to let her go home; and (c) stated that the officer was "ruining her life and career."

RELEVANT STANDARDS

1. Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution provides that any Texas justice or judge may be disciplined for willful or persistent conduct that is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of his duties or casts public discredit upon the judiciary or administration of justice.
2. Canon 2B of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct states, in relevant part, that: "A judge shall not lend the prestige of judicial office to advance the private interests of the judge or others."

CONCLUSION

The Commission concludes based on the facts and evidence before it that Justice Longoria repeatedly identified herself to police officers as being a judge, offered to show the officers her judicial badge, and attempted to use her position as a judge to obtain favorable treatment and escape the consequences of her conduct, in willful and persistent violation of Canon 2B of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct. Furthermore, the judge's conduct during the traffic stop, her arrest for driving while intoxicated, and her subsequent plea of no contest to a speeding charge received widespread media attention which cast public discredit upon the judiciary and the administration of justice, in violation of Article V, §1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution.

In condemnation of the conduct described above that violated Canon 2B of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct and Article V, §1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution, it is the Commission's decision to issue a **PUBLIC ADMONITION** to the Honorable Nora

Longoria, Justice on the Thirteenth Court of Appeals in Edinburg, Hidalgo County, Texas.

Pursuant to the authority contained in Article V, §1-a(8) of the Texas Constitution, it is ordered that the actions described above be made the subject of a **PUBLIC ADMONITION** by the Commission.

The Commission has taken this action in a continuing effort to protect public confidence in the judicial system and to assist the state's judiciary in its efforts to embody the principles and values set forth in the Texas Constitution and the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.

Issued this the 13th day of March, 2015.

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY

Honorable Steven L. Seider, Chair
State Commission on Judicial Conduct