



**BEFORE THE  
STATE COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

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**CJC No. 18-0621**

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**PUBLIC REPRIMAND**

**HONORABLE JEANINE L. HOWARD  
CRIMINAL DISTRICT COURT NO. 6  
DALLAS, DALLAS COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting on February 5-6, 2020, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct concluded a review of the allegations against the Honorable Jeanine L. Howard, Judge of the Criminal District Court No. 6, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas. Judge Howard was advised by letter of the Commission's concerns and provided a written response. After considering the evidence before it, the Commission enters the following findings and conclusions:

**FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Honorable Jeanine L. Howard was Judge of the Criminal District Court No. 6 in Dallas, Dallas County, Texas.
2. Keisha Nixon, a domestic violence victim, is the former girlfriend, now wife, of Cleveland Nixon, a defendant who had several family violence cases between 2011 and 2014, which were pending in Judge Howard's court.
3. On February 5, 2018, Mrs. Nixon attended a Meet the Candidates political forum called, "Monday Night Politics," sponsored by the Dallas Examiner.
4. Judge Howard, a candidate for re-election to the Dallas County District Court No. 6, appeared at the forum to address the public regarding her qualifications and experience. Judge Howard's campaign opponent and Democratic candidate Alison Grinter also appeared at the forum.
5. During closing remarks and after seeing Mrs. Nixon clap for her opponent, Judge Howard took the microphone, singled her out of the crowd and called her by name stating, "Ms. Nixon."

6. According to Ms. Nixon, Judge Howard went on to humiliate her by disclosing that she was a domestic abuse victim in a room of at least 200 people when she stated, “Her boyfriend went to prison for assaulting her several times.”
7. Judge Howard’s conduct during the political forum was caught on video, and gained local media attention.
8. In responding to the Commission’s inquiry, Judge Howard acknowledged making the statement about Ms. Nixon but denied that she humiliated or intended to humiliate Ms. Nixon.
9. Judge Howard stated that Ms. Nixon became upset with her, the prosecutors and defense counsel in September 2014, after she revoked Cleveland’s probation and sentenced him to 5 years in the penitentiary.
10. When she drew an opponent in November 2017, Judge Howard recalled that Ms. Nixon joined forces with her opponent, “in an ugly campaign – in general and on social media – in which Ms. Nixon posted “negative and untrue” information about her to the point Judge Howard considered this “just another form of harassment.”
11. Judge Howard defended her conduct by asserting that her statement about Ms. Nixon was based on proceedings that are of public record and was made because she felt “attacked and embarrassed” that night and fearful of what Ms. Nixon would do.

#### **RELEVANT STANDARD**

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.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Based upon the record before it and the factual findings recited above, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct determined that the Honorable Jeanine Howard, Judge of the Criminal District Court No. 6, in Dallas, Dallas County, Texas, should be publicly reprimanded for identifying and speaking publicly about a domestic violence victim during a political forum, and the resultant media attention regarding her comments, which constitute willful or persistent conduct that cast public discredit upon the judiciary and the administration of justice, in violation of Article V, Section 1-a(6) of the Texas Constitution. The Commission has taken this action pursuant to the authority conferred it in Article V, Section 1-a(8) of the Texas Constitution in continuing effort to promote confidence in and high standards for the judiciary.

Issued this 12<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2020.



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David C. Hall  
Chairman, State Commission on Judicial Conduct