

BEFORE THE
JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION COMMISSION
OF WEST VIRGINIA

IN THE MATTER OF:

COMPLAINT NO. 188-94

Magistrate June Sovine
Magistrate for
Putnam County, West Virginia

This matter is before the Judicial Investigation Commission upon a complaint filed on September 26, 1994, setting forth certain allegations against Magistrate June Sovine, Magistrate for Putnam County, West Virginia.

The complaint was filed to determine if there had been a violation of the Code of Judicial Conduct in the manner in which Magistrate Sovine handled a traffic citation against the Superintendent of Putnam County Schools. During the investigation of this matter it was learned that Magistrate Sovine learned that the Superintendent of Putnam County Schools received a speeding ticket from a West Virginia State Trooper and asked Magistrate Sovine about the amount of the fine at the Magistrate Court. She informed him not to pay the fine at the time since she wanted to talk to the Trooper.

Magistrate Sovine called the West Virginia Trooper and asked him for any consideration he could give the Superintendent of Schools. She was informed by the Trooper that he could not reduce the speed on the ticket but would think about withdrawing the complaint. Subsequently, the Trooper called Magistrate Sovine and told her that he would withdraw the complaint.

A few days later the Superintendent of Schools went back to the courthouse and inquired about the ticket. He was told that the ticket had been dismissed.

Upon receipt of the complaint it was investigated pursuant to the Rules of Judicial Disciplinary Procedure. The complaint and the investigation of this matter were reviewed by the Judicial Investigation Commission at its meeting on February 10, 1995; and it was determined that probable cause does exist that Magistrate June Sovine violated Canons 1, 2, and 3A and B(2) and (7) of the Code of Judicial Conduct. It was further determined that formal discipline was not appropriate under the circumstances. The Judicial Investigation Commission determined that pursuant to Rule 2.7 (c) a written admonishment would be issued to Magistrate June Sovine. It is, therefore, the decision of the Judicial Investigation Commission that Magistrate June Sovine be and she hereby is admonished for her conduct as is more fully set forth in the matters asserted herein and the complaint filed in this matter on September 26, 1994.

Fred L. Fox, II

Fred L. Fox, II, Chairman

Date: 15 February '95