



**BEFORE THE STATE COMMISSION
ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

CJC No. 21-0950

PUBLIC ADMONITION

**HONORABLE MILLIE THOMPSON
COUNTY COURT AT LAW NO. 3
SAN MARCOS, HAYS COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting on August 6-7, 2025, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct concluded a review of the allegations against the Honorable Millie Thompson, former judge of County Court at Law No. 3, in San Marcos, Hays County, Texas. Judge Thompson was advised by letter of the Commission's concerns and provided a written response. Judge Thompson appeared before the Commission on August 6, 2025, but did not provide any testimony.

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 Millie Thompson served as the Judge of the County Court at Law No. 3, in San Marcos, Hays County, Texas.
2. Judge Thompson took office of Hays County Court at Law No. 3 on January 4, 2021.
3. On January 21, 2021, Chris Perez ("Perez"), Lead Assistant Court Administrator for Hays County Court at Law No. 3, emailed Judge Thompson regarding a probate case that was mistakenly placed on the docket in another court but should have been placed on her docket scheduled for the next day, January 22, 2021.
4. In reply to Perez's email, Judge Thompson stated, "This is grounds for termination – if you are my coordinator. Talk to Ms. Garner about the black letter law I just provided her."
5. On January 22, 2021, Judge Thompson invited Perez into her chambers, questioned him regarding the probate matter and accused him of lying to her twice by omission.

6. Judge Thompson tried several times to get Perez to confess to lying to her which he continued to deny. After Perez requested she provide proof that he lied to her, Judge Thompson began yelling at him and told him to get out of her office. After Perez replied to her yelling at him, Judge Thompson got up from her desk, walked towards him, pointed her finger at him and yelled, "Get out, get out."
7. Upon Perez leaving her office, Judge Thompson yelled, "You're fired.", "Yes you are, You're fired."
8. Judge Robert Updegrove, judge of Hays County Court at Law No. 1, heard the confrontation between Judge Thompson and Perez, and later accompanied Perez to Human Resources.
9. In both of his sworn statements provided to Human Resources, Perez accused Judge Thompson of causing a hostile work environment.
10. In her written responses to the Commission, Judge Thompson denied she created a hostile work environment for Perez and accused him of deliberately engaging in misconduct.
11. Regarding the January 22nd Incident in her chambers, Judge Thompson stated Perez was disrespecting her and refused to leave her chambers when she ordered him to. She believed this was sufficient grounds to fire Perez.
12. In late January 2021, Judge Thompson issued a cease-and-desist order and a criminal trespass warning against Judge Chris Johnson, judge of Hays County Court of Law No. 2, and Judge Updegrove forbidding them and their staffers from entering her office.
13. According to an article that appeared in the Austin American-Stateman on February 5, 2021, *'Insane chaos': Some Hays County Lawyers allege caustic work environment in new judge's court*, Judge Thompson wrote to Judge Johnson and Judge Updegrove, "'You have created a hostile work environment by entering my chambers without my consent. You have created a hostile work environment by lying to the coordinators you assigned me by telling them I have no authority to fire my own coordinators. ... I had to order a man I just fire out of my office more than four times, and he still refused to leave. ... Cease and desist your retaliation against me for winning the bench.'"
14. In her written response to the Commission, Judge Thompson stated she issued the cease-and-desist order because of the conflicts she was having with Judge Johnson and Judge Updegrove. She stated, "They did not want me appointing lawyers to indigent defendants or reducing bail for those charged with misdemeanors. To prevent me from making these changes, they took control over CCL3 through the staff."
15. Judge Thompson hired a private locksmith to change the locks of her office at the Hays County Government Center. When the head of the building maintenance department tried to explain to Judge Thompson the County Policy regarding having her office door rekeyed and tried to provide the proper form, Judge Thompson berated and yelled at him, issued a written "order" to change the lock and threatened him with contempt of court.
16. In her written response to the Commission, Judge Thompson explained after following the recommendation of a Hays County elected official regarding having her office re-keyed, she hired a private locksmith. She denied berating the head of the building maintenance department when he confronted her while her office lock was being changed. Judge

Thompson stated the head of the building maintenance department seemed angry, yelled at her and indicated he needed a court order to authorize the changing of the locks. Judge Thompson provided him a court order and he left.

17. In her statement to Human Resource, Kyla Crumley Stoddard (“Stoddard”), Assistant Court Administrator for Hays County Court at Law No. 3, stated Judge Thompson caused a situation where she “was alienated” from the rest of her co-workers out of fear of what Judge Thompson might do if she “caught” her fraternizing with her own colleagues. Stoddard also stated she became fearful for herself and those around her after watching and hearing Judge Thompson explode on multiple colleagues.
18. In her affidavit to the Commission, Stoddard stated, “After accusing Chris of purposefully making her look bad, calling him a liar, ‘firing him,’ and yelling at him so loudly that people all down the hallway could hear her, she became increasingly hostile, rude, and disrespectful towards the CCL staff, judges, and members of other departments.” She also stated, “my time working for Millie Thompson ended up being the most toxic, stressful, demeaning, and hostile experience I’ve ever had.”
19. In her written response to the Commission, Judge Thompson denied creating a hostile work environment for Stoddard and stated, “I treated Ms. Crumley Stoddard professionally, but I did not like her. I thought she was the beneficiary of back-door nepotism and she not good at her job.”
20. In his statement to the Commission, Judge Johnson stated, though Judge Thompson was not at the County Courts at Law for long, she “caused a great deal of interruption, stress and even fear for those who worked with her, for her, or who appeared in her Court.”
21. Judge Updegrave, who also provided a statement, stated Judge Thompson made little effort to interact with the staff and demanded she be allowed to hire her own court administrator which the Hays County Courts at Law were not set up for. Also, Judge Updegrave stated Judge Thompson caused staffing issues daily and the stress in the office was intolerable.
22. On April 8, 2021, Judge Thompson filed a declaratory action lawsuit (the “Lawsuit”) against Judge Johnson and Judge Updegrave, alleging Judge Johnson as the Local Administrative Judge of the Hays County Courts of Law was not allowing her to appoint her own coordinator nor court reporter because Hays County has a “court administrator” system¹ in which all the court coordinators and court reporters are under the administrative law judge.
23. Later, Judge Thompson added the Hays County Commissioners Court to the Lawsuit in order for the Commissioners Court to provide and approve reasonable compensation regarding the court coordinator that she wanted to appoint.
24. Eventually, Judge Thompson nonsuited the Lawsuit, and it was dismissed.
25. In her written statement to the Commission, Judge Thompson stated she filed a good faith whistleblower lawsuit because “I was a lone female judge, blocked from exercising a statutory right to appoint my staff and blocked from even knowing what the staff was doing on my court’s behalf by two male judges that completely controlled my court.”

¹ See Tex. Gov’t Code § 75.401(a), (c) & (e).

26. Judge Thompson stated she only “sought to change procedures - *only for CCL3* – so that they would be fairer and more Constitutional. The other two judges took great offense at this and used the staff to try to prevent the changes. When I realized that the staff was being used as an impediment to change, I sought to exercise a statutory right of appointment. When the judges blocked that, I sought relief through a declaratory action.”
27. Judge Thompson recused herself and reassigned several attorneys’ cases that were assigned to her court without a valid legal explanation.
28. In her written response to the Commission, Judge Thompson stated she recused herself when it was appropriate according to Texas law.
29. Several news articles were published regarding Judge Thompson’s conduct, including, but not limited to, the issuance of the cease-and desist order against Judge Johnson and Judge Updegrave, the January 22nd Incident involving Perez, the hiring of a private locksmith to change her office locks, the declaratory judgment lawsuit, and her recusal for several attorneys’ cases.²
30. During her appearance before the Commission, Judge Thompson declined to testify or answer questions posed by the Commission asserting she could not afford an attorney to represent her.

RELEVANT STANDARDS AND AUTHORITIES

1. Canon 3B(1) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, “A judge shall hear and decide matters assigned to the judge except those in which disqualification is required or recusal is appropriate.”
2. Canon 3B(4) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part, “A judge shall be patient, dignified and courteous to litigants, jurors, witnesses, lawyers and other with whom the judge deals in an official capacity, ...”
3. Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution provides, in relevant part, that a judge shall not engage in “willful and persistent conduct that is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of [her] duties or casts public discredit on the judiciary or on the administration of justice, ...”

CONCLUSION

Based upon the record before it and the factual findings recited above, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct has determined that the Honorable Millie Thompson, former judge of County Court at Law No. 3, in San Marcos, Hays County, Texas should be publicly

² “‘Insane chaos’: Some Hays County lawyers allege caustic work environment in new judge’s court”, Austin American-Statesman, February 5, 2021; “County attorneys find new judge difficult, even as office employees quit”, Hays Free Press News-Dispatch, February 5, 2021; “Texas judge changes locks to her office, warns colleagues about trespassing”, American Bar Association Journal, February 8, 2021; “Firing fiasco turns court at law judges against each other”, Hays Free Press News-Dispatch, April 9, 2021; “Judge Thompson filed lawsuit against other county judges”, Hays Free Press News-Dispatch, April 9, 2021; “Judge Thompson’s lawsuit saga reaches county commissioners”, Hays Free Press News-Dispatch, April 22, 2021; “Released child trafficker back in jail”, Hays Free Press News-Dispatch, May 6, 2021; “Millie Thompson resigns four months into her judgeship”, Hays Free Press News-Dispatch, May 12, 2021.

admonished for: (1) failing to be patient, dignified and courteous to others with whom she dealt with in an official capacity when she: (a) created a hostile work environment for: (i) Judge Johnson and Judge Updegrove when she issued a cease-and-desist order which included a criminal trespass warning and filed a declaratory action lawsuit against them; and (ii) Hays County Courts at Law's staff, including but not limited to, Chris Perez and Kyla Stoddard; and (b) berated, yelled and threatened with contempt of court the head of the building maintenance department regarding the re-keying of her office door; and (2) failing to hear and decided matters assigned to her when she recused herself from several attorneys' cases assigned to her court without a valid legal explanation. Judge Thompson's failures in the foregoing respects constituted willful and persistent conduct that is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of her duties and cast public discredit on the judiciary or on the administration of justice, in violation of Canons 3B(1) and 3B(4) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct and Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution.

The Commission has taken this action pursuant to the authority conferred it in Article V, Sec. 1-a(8) of the Texas Constitution in a continuing effort to promote confidence in and high standards for the judiciary.

Issued this the 11 day of August, 2025.

Ken Wise

Ken Wise
Vice-Chair, State Commission on Judicial Conduct