



**BEFORE THE
STATE COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

CJC No. 01-0362-JP

PUBLIC ADMONITION

**HONORABLE PATRICIA OTT
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PRECINCT 1
ROUND ROCK, WILLIAMSON COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting in Austin, Texas, on June 13-14, 2002, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct (the "Commission") concluded a review of allegations against the Honorable Patricia Ott, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1, Round Rock, Williamson County, Texas. Judge Ott was advised by letter of the Commission's concerns and provided a written response. Judge Ott appeared with counsel before the Commission on October 18, 2001 and gave testimony. After considering the evidence before it, the Commission entered the following Findings and Conclusions:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Honorable Patricia Ott was the Justice of the Peace for Precinct 1, in Round Rock, Williamson County, Texas.
2. On December 19, 2000, as a group of prospective jurors were being qualified by Judge Ott for jury service, the 4-year-old child of one of these jurors began disrupting the proceedings.
3. According to witnesses, Judge Ott ordered a bailiff to remove the child from the courtroom and forced the tearful mother to remain in the courtroom until the judge had completed qualifying the jurors.

4. According to the mother of the child, Judge Ott treated her rudely and spoke to her and her child in a loud and threatening tone of voice.
5. Judge Ott testified before the Commission that, in her opinion, she handled the situation appropriately and was merely exercising her authority to maintain order and decorum in the courtroom.
6. Judge Ott's term of office expires on December 31, 2002. She is not seeking re-election.

RELEVANT STANDARD

Canon 3B(4) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part, that "[a] judge shall be patient, dignified and courteous to litigants, jurors, witnesses, lawyers and others with whom the judge deals in an official capacity,..."

CONCLUSION

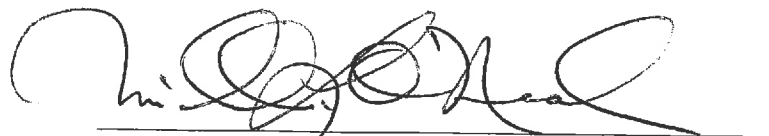
Based on the foregoing facts, the Commission concluded that Judge Ott's conduct toward a prospective juror and her young child lacked the patience, courtesy and dignity required of a judicial official in violation of Canon 3B(4) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.

In condemnation of the above-recited conduct that violated Canon 3B(4) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct, it is the Commission's decision to issue a **PUBLIC ADMONITION** to the Honorable Patricia Ott, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1, Round Rock, Williamson County, Texas.

Pursuant to the authority contained in Article 5, Section 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 21 day of June, 2002.



Honorable Michael O'Neal, Chair
State Commission on Judicial Conduct