

COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE
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FOR RELEASE
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JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE COMMISSION ISSUES
DECISION AND ORDER REMOVING
JUDGE VALERIANO SAUCEDO FROM OFFICE

The Commission on Judicial Performance has issued a decision and order removing Judge Valeriano Saucedo, of the Tulare County Superior Court, from office. The commission's determination becomes final in 30 days, subject to discretionary review by the California Supreme Court.

The commission ordered Judge Saucedo removed from office for a course of conduct toward his courtroom clerk that included manufacturing an anonymous letter that accused her in crude terms of having an affair with a court bailiff, using the letter and numerous gifts worth thousands of dollars in an attempt to pressure the clerk into a close, personal relationship, and providing legal advice to her son. After the clerk informed the judge that she was going to request a transfer from his department, he deposited \$8,000 into her bank account. Later that day, during a court proceeding, the judge gave a note to the clerk, accusing her of extortion, in an attempt to intimidate the clerk and ensure her silence. Judge Saucedo denied writing the anonymous letter and the other essential facts of the case, blaming the clerk for his misconduct, and claiming he was only "mentoring" her. The commission found that significant portions of the judge's testimony lacked credibility.

The commission stated that "[t]he deceitful, calculated and unseemly nature of the judge's misconduct, compounded by his lack of candor in response to the commission's investigation and untruthful testimony under oath before the masters" compelled his removal from office. The commission found that the judge's highly improper course of conduct violated numerous canons of the Code of Judicial Ethics and was committed in bad faith. The commission found that some of the judge's conduct was undertaken in a judicial capacity and therefore constituted willful misconduct, the most serious constitutional basis for censure or removal of a judge. However, the commission stated that even if the judge had not been acting in a judicial capacity, "the entirety of his misconduct warrants removal." While recognizing and appreciating the judge's many contributions to his community and the legal profession, the commission concluded, "Certain misconduct is so completely at odds with the core qualities and role of a judge that no amount of mitigation can redeem the seriousness of the wrongdoing or obviate the need for removal in order to fulfill our mandate to protect the public, enforce high

standards of judicial conduct, and maintain public confidence in the integrity of the judiciary. This is such a case.”

Judge Saucedo is represented by Attorneys Randall A. Miller and Caroline van Oosterom, of Miller Law Associates, APC, in Los Angeles.

The commission’s Decision and Order of Removal is available on the commission’s website at <http://cjp.ca.gov> (under “Pending Cases - Press Releases & Documents” and “Public Discipline & Decisions”) and at the commission’s office.

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The commission is composed of three judges, two lawyers and six public members. The chairperson is Honorable Erica R. Yew of the Santa Clara County Superior Court. Commission member Anthony P. Capozzi, Esq. is recused in this matter.

For further information about the Commission on Judicial Performance, see the commission’s website at <http://cjp.ca.gov>.