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Top court suspends ex-judge for a year

Squire's infractions deserve discipline, six justices agree

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THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH

Citing a "persistent pattern of legal errors" and a lack of proper temperament, the Ohio Supreme Court has suspended the law license of Carole Squire, former Franklin County Domestic Relations judge, for at least one year.



Former Domestic Relations Judge Carole Squire continues to contest her loss in the 2006 election.

The court's 6-1 decision, released yesterday, means that Squire may not practice law or run for judicial office for 12 months. Another 12-month suspension was stayed, provided she has no further disciplinary violations within the next two years.

Her suspension was not more severe because she had no past infractions and displayed good character in the community, the ruling said.

Squire, 54, earned her law degree 30 years ago. A Democrat, she was elected to the domestic-relations bench in 2000 but lost a re-election bid last November. She is trying to overturn the defeat, claiming multiple irregularities in the operation of the election. An official recount had her losing to Republican Chris Geer by more than 13,000 votes.

A three-judge panel denied her appeal, and she has taken that ruling to the Supreme Court. Yesterday's decision has no bearing on the outcome of that appeal.

In agreeing to a suspension, the Supreme Court adopted the findings made by the Board of Commissioners on Grievances and Discipline, which found that Squire committed 40 violations of the Code of Judicial Conduct and 12 violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

According to the board, Squire:

- Failed to promptly and properly conduct AOTW hearings between 2003 and 2006.
- Conducted improper communications with those who appeared in her courtroom.
- Was rude to litigants and attorneys.

Her judicial intemperance included comments such as "If you don't like it, you can appeal me," and "You're nothing but a liar," the ruling said.

The disciplinary board heard testimony from 28 witnesses and took in more than 125 exhibits.

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