



Louisiana Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee

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PUBLIC STATEMENT

Every candidate for judicial office in Louisiana must campaign in accordance with the precepts contained in Canon 7 of the Louisiana Code of Judicial Conduct. The Louisiana Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee (“the Committee”) is authorized by the Louisiana Supreme Court to review and investigate complaints, which allege violations of certain provisions of Canon 7. Although Committee deliberations are and remain confidential, once a public statement has been issued or a complaint has been dismissed, the complaint and response are matters of public record and may be requested through the Court’s Community Relations division.

The Committee has received a complaint which alleges that Judge Sharon Marchman, a candidate for the First District, Election Section 2A of the Second Circuit Court of Appeal violated Canon 7A(9) of the Louisiana Code of Judicial Conduct. Canon 7A(9) provides that a judge or judicial candidate shall not “knowingly make, or cause to be made, a false statement concerning the identity, qualifications, present position, or other fact concerning the candidate or an opponent.”

The complaint concerns a video advertisement created by the Committee to Elect Judge Sharon Marchman, which asserts that Judge Stephens’ law firm was “paid” to represent a criminal defendant, Sonny James Caston, against murder charges. In fact, approximately 30 years ago, Judge Stephens’ father, Sonny Stephens, accepted an appointment by the court to

represent an indigent criminal defendant who had a right to be represented by competent counsel at trial.

The Committee believes that this video advertisement violates Canon 7A(9) in that it misleads the public as to circumstances under which Judge Stephens' father and law partner came to represent Sonny James Caston.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Marta-Ann Schnabel".

Judicial Campaign Oversight Committee
Marta-Ann Schnabel, Chair