

Case study (criminology)



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Criminology A family court judge Steven Jones from Las Vegas was this week suspended for three months without pay and even censured publicly because of engaging in unethical behaviour with the court prosecutor. They had been romantically engaged and during the hearing of her cases, the judge helped her avoid reassignment of cases instead of recusing himself from the cases. According to the ABA journal, the ruling of the ethics counts was heard and made by the Nevada Commission on Judicial Discipline since last year (2013) but the ruling was made this week on the 3rd of February 2014.

This is not the first ethical case against Judge Jones as in late 2012; he was involved in an investment fraud case and was federally indicted. The consequences that time were suspension with pay and the case is still in the trial stage.

Even though in this article only the Judge's unethical behaviour has been mentioned, the prosecutor also had unethical conduct. She allowed the Judge to go ahead with hearing her cases and even helping her with case reassignment which she knew was wrong both ethically and criminally. Both parties (judge and prosecutor) were aware of the conflict of interest their romantic relationship presented to their work relationships but yet they simply were ignorant about it. They instead chose to use their romantic involvement and power of the black robe to give an upper hand to the prosecutor in the cases as well as prevent her from getting overworked hence the reassignment.

The Judge romantic relationships or not holds a position in office where he is supposed to uphold equality, fairness and integrity not to mention ethics. In this case, he used the same office to break all the above mentioned virtues

instead of upholding them all because of a romantic involvement with an officer of the court. Their behaviour set a bad example, creates mistrust and damage the confidence of the public towards law officers and the justice system in general.

There are several measures which can be taken to prevent a repeat of the unethical behaviour like the one witnessed in the above case or even of other unethical behaviour likely to be manifested in the courtroom. The first of these is to prohibit any romantic involvement between colleagues in the justice system unless they do not share the same court like Judge Jones and the prosecutor. This is as a way to avoid a repeat of the behaviour of the judge and encourage fairness as opposed to favouritism.

The other way is to be conducting regular background and updated information on the courtroom officers ranging from attorneys to judges. This information collection should be a mandatory random process to always ensure that these officers who are supposed to uphold the law do not break it and they hide no skeletons in their closets that infringe or are in contradiction with the law. A repeat of law breaking and unethical misconduct should have tougher measures ranging from hefty fines to jail term to avoid a repeat and serve as a warning.

Work Cited

Neil, Martha. " Previously suspended after fraud indictment, judge gets 3 months without pay in separate ethics case." ABA Journal, February 4th, 2014. Retrieved from: http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/suspended_with_pay_after_fraud_indictment_judge_gets_3-month_suspension/