

ATASCOSA COUNTY JUDGES REPORT

I wish to talk to you about the “Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.” In this column, I have said that judges in Texas are held to a higher standard than other elected officials.

Here are some of those higher standards:

1. A judge shall not allow any relationship to influence judicial conduct or judgment. A judge shall not lend the prestige of judicial office to advance the private interests of the judge or others; nor shall a judge convey or permit others to convey the impression that they are in a special position to influence the judge.
2. The judicial duties of a judge take precedence over all the judge’s other activities. Judicial duties include all the duties of the judge’s office prescribed by law.
3. A Judge or Judicial Candidate shall not knowingly or recklessly misrepresent the identity, qualifications, present position, or other facts concerning themselves or an opponent.
4. A Judge or Judicial Candidate shall not authorize the public use of his or her name endorsing another candidate for any public office ...
5. Any person seeking elective judicial office listed in Canon 6A(1) [which includes “statutory county judge”] shall be subject to the same standards of Canon 5 that are required of the judiciary. The rule also includes candidates that are running for Justice of the Peace [Judge]. Proposition 5, just passed, authorizes the Judicial Commission to receive complaints on candidates.

So, this writer advises any candidates for the office of Judge that they should download the “Texas Code of Judicial Conduct” <https://www.txcourts.gov/media/1452409/texas-code-of-judicial-conduct.pdf> and read it carefully. Even if you do not hold the office now, if a complaint is filed with the Judicial Commission against you during the campaign, it could come back to bite you, if elected. The Judicial Commission has the authority to warn, put on probation, suspend or remove judicial authority. So, my advice is to follow the rules as laid out in the code. Of course, it is illegal in Texas for any candidate to promise anyone something specific in exchange for their vote.

Thank you for listening. Have a happy Thanksgiving!