

COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE
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COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL PERFORMANCE ISSUES
PUBLIC ADMONISHMENT OF JUDGE THOMAS R. ADAMS

The Commission on Judicial Performance has publicly admonished Judge Thomas R. Adams of Santa Barbara County Superior Court.

The commission determined that it should publicly admonish Judge Adams for poor demeanor at a hearing during an arraignment calendar. During this hearing, Judge Adams became angry, expressed impatience with counsel for the defendant, raised his voice and rose from the bench when addressing counsel, threw off his glasses and pointed at counsel, and flung the moving papers at counsel, causing them to land in front of the podium where counsel stood. In addition, in a recent, prior investigation, Judge Adams engaged in a lack of candor with the commission. During that investigation, Judge Adams stated that he was retiring, that his last day on the bench had already passed, and that he would not be returning to the bench. Judge Adams did not retire and returned to the bench before the commission issued discipline in the prior matter.

Judge Adams's misconduct was aggravated by prior discipline. In June 2023, the commission privately admonished Judge Adams for, inter alia, engaging in speech that would reasonably be perceived as bias, prejudice, or harassment, based on sex or gender, and for engaging in an ex parte communication with a jury foreperson. In 1993, Judge Adams also received a private admonishment for ordering a pro se family law litigant into custody for two days, without a contempt hearing, which constituted an egregious violation of due process.

The public admonishment is available on the commission's website at <https://cjp.ca.gov> (under "Pending Cases – Press Releases & Documents" and "Public Discipline & Decisions"). Judge Adams is represented by Randall A. Miller, Esq. of Miller Law Associates, APC of Los Angeles.

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The commission is composed of six public members, three judges and two lawyers. The chairperson is Dr. Michael A. Moodian. Commission member Rickey Ivie, Esq. is recused in this matter. Two public member positions were vacant.

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