



**BEFORE THE STATE COMMISSION
ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

CJC No. 25-0937

**PUBLIC ADMONITION
AND
ORDER OF ADDITIONAL EDUCATION**

**HONORABLE MICHAEL TOWERS
JUSTICE OF THE PEACE, PRECINCT 1
BANDERA, BANDERA COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting on February 4-5, 2026, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct concluded a review of the allegations against the Honorable Michael Towers, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1, in Bandera, Bandera County, Texas. Judge Towers was advised by letter of the Commission's concerns and provided a written response.

After considering the evidence before it, the Commission entered the following Findings and Conclusion:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. At all times relevant hereto, the Honorable Michael Towers was the Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1 in Bandera, Bandera County, Texas.
2. On August 5, 2024, an eviction suit, *Jeanne Reddrick vs. Mike James Welford*, Cause No. CVE4-25-10, was filed in Judge Towers' court that involved the ownership of a modular home (the "Eviction Case").
3. Having not previously handled an eviction suit involving title to a modular home, Judge Towers consulted with the Texas Justice Court Training Center (the "TJCTC").
4. The TJCTC confirmed to Judge Towers that he lacked jurisdiction over the Eviction Case because of the title issue and advised Judge Towers to either dismiss or stay the Eviction Case until such time as the ownership issue was resolved by the district court.

5. Instead of dismissing or staying the Eviction Case, on February 26, 2025, Judge Towers signed an *Order Granting Defendant's Motion to Transfer Venue* and ordered the Eviction Case be transferred to the 198th District Court.
6. On May 14, 2025, Judge Towers held a hearing in the Eviction Case. Plaintiff's counsel appeared in-person and defendant's counsel participated telephonically (the "May 14th Hearing").
7. At the conclusion of the May 14th Hearing, Judge Towers orally ruled that he was dismissing the Eviction Case.
8. After defendant's counsel hung up the telephone, Judge Towers communicated with plaintiff's attorney about his ruling and her desire that instead of dismissing the Eviction Case, she would prefer the court enter a final judgment which the plaintiff could appeal.
9. On May 14, 2025, Judge Towers signed an *Eviction Judgment* in favor of the defendant in the Eviction Case.
10. A description of the May 14th Hearing, as documented by court staff, was contained in the court records and reads as follows:

EVICITION TRIAL BY JUDGE. PLTF'S ATTY APPEARED IN PERSON, WHILE THE DEFENDANT'S ATTORNEY PARTICIPATED VIA CONFERENCE CALL. JUDGE TOWERS INITIALLY DISMISSED THE CASE WITH BOTH PARTIES PRESENT. HOWEVER, AFTER THE DEFENSE WAS RELEASED FROM THE PROCEEDING, THE PLTF'S ATTORNEY DISCUSSED APPEALING THE EVICTION AND FILING A PROPERTY ISSUE IN DISTRICT COURT. JUDGE TOWERS THEN DECIDED TO ORDER A JUDGMENT IN FAVOR OF THE DEFENDANT, SETTING APPEAL BONDS AT \$500 FOR THE PLTF AND \$2,000 FOR THE DEF ALONG WITH \$500 IN ATTORNEY FEES AWARDED TO THE DEFENSE, INSTEAD OF DISMISSING THE CASE AS ORIGINALLY RULED.
11. In his responses to the Commission, Judge Towers expressed his opinion that "the effect of a dismissal and a judgment for the defendant in [the Eviction Case] were tantamount to the same thing" and indicated he did not expect defendant's counsel to "have any issues" with his ruling.
12. Judge Towers acknowledged, "In my eleven years on the bench I have never had the occasion to refer a case to District Court, so my vehicle to do so may not have been the most correct way to do so."

RELEVANT STANDARDS AND AUTHORITIES

1. Canon 2A of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part, "A judge shall comply with the law..."
2. Canon 3B(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part, "A judge ... shall maintain professional competence in [the law]..."
3. Canon 3B(8) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part, "A judge shall accord to every person who has a legal interest in a proceeding, or that person's lawyer, the right to be heard according to law."

4. Canon 6C(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part, “A justice of the peace or a municipal court judge, except as authorized by law, shall not directly or indirectly initiate, permit, nor consider *ex parte* or other communications concerning the merits of a pending judicial proceeding.”
5. Texas Rule of Civil Procedure 510.3(e) provides, in relevant part, “Only Issue. The court must adjudicate the right to actual possession and not title. Counterclaims and the joinder of suits against third parties are not permitted in eviction cases. A claim that is not asserted because of this rule can be brought in a separate suit in a court of proper jurisdiction.”
6. Section 27.031(b)(4) of the Texas Government Code provides, in relevant part, “A justice court does not have jurisdiction: ... of a suit for trial of title to land; ...”

CONCLUSION

Based upon the record before it and the factual findings recited above, the Texas State Commission on Judicial Conduct has determined that the Honorable Michael Towers, Justice of the Peace, Precinct 1, in Bandera, Bandera County, Texas, should be publicly admonished and ordered to obtain additional education for his handling of the Eviction Case, namely: (1) failing to comply with the law or maintaining professional competence in the law when he signed an order transferring venue to the district court and then issued an eviction judgment in the matter despite lacking the jurisdiction to do so; and (2) engaging in improper *ex parte* communications with plaintiff’s counsel and denying defendant’s counsel the right to be heard regarding the Court making final judgment in the Eviction Case instead of dismissing it as was decided in the May 14th Hearing, in violation of Canons 2A, 3B(2), 3B(8), and 6C(2) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct.

Pursuant to this Order, Judge Towers must obtain **two (2) hours** of instruction with a mentor, in addition to his required annual judicial education for Fiscal Year 2026. In particular, the Commission desires that Judge Towers receive this additional education in the area of eviction law. Pursuant to the authority contained in Section 33.036 of the Texas Government Code, the Commission authorizes the disclosure of certain information relating to this matter to the Texas Justice Court Training Center to the extent necessary to enable that entity to assign the appropriate mentor for Judge Towers.

Judge Towers shall complete the additional **two (2) hours** of instruction recited above within **60 days** from the date of written notification of the assignment of a mentor. Upon receiving such notice, it is Judge Towers’ responsibility to contact the assigned mentor and schedule the additional education.

The Commission has taken this action pursuant to the authority conferred it in Article V, Section 1-a(8) of the Texas Constitution in a continuing effort to promote confidence in and high standards for the judiciary.

Issued this the 17 day of March, 2026.



Gary L. Steel
Chairman, State Commission on Judicial Conduct