



**BEFORE THE STATE COMMISSION
ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT**

CJC No. 23-0176

**PUBLIC WARNING
AND
ORDER OF ADDITIONAL EDUCATION**

**HONORABLE JESUS NEVAREZ
231ST DISTRICT COURT
FORT WORTH, TARRANT COUNTY, TEXAS**

During its meeting on June 5-6, 2024, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct concluded a review of the allegations in this matter against the Honorable Jesus Nevarez, the judge of the 231st District Court in Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas. Judge Nevarez was advised by letter of the Commission's concerns and provided a written response. On June 6, 2024, Judge Nevarez appeared before the Commission and gave testimony regarding this matter.

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

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. At all relevant times, the Honorable Jesus Nevarez served as judge of the 231st District Court in Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas.
2. Judge Lindsay DeVos Slinkard ("Judge DeVos") was appointed as the Associate Judge in the 231st District Court and was officially sworn in on May 1, 2014, while Judge Nevarez was serving as the judge in the 231st District Court.
3. During Judge DeVos' eight years serving as the Associate Judge, Judge Nevarez engaged in a pattern of sexually harassing conduct directed at Judge DeVos.

4. Text messages from December 2021 to June 2022 demonstrate a pattern of Judge Nevarez texting Judge DeVos late into the evening; referring to Judge DeVos as “babe,” “babes,” “hon,” “baby,” and “beautiful”; telling Judge DeVos he loves her; and texting Judge DeVos multiple days in a row without a response.
5. Judge DeVos resigned in August 2022 and made an audio recording of her resignation. In the audio recording, Judge Nevarez refers to Judge DeVos as “baby” at least two times. Judge Nevarez tries to convince Judge DeVos to change her mind regarding the resignation and states multiple times that he will hold onto her resignation letter so she can think about it and come back if she changes her mind. Further, Judge Nevarez states he has “loved [her] forever.”
6. Two confidential sources expressed witnessing Judge Nevarez’s inappropriate conduct with Judge DeVos, and hearing from Judge DeVos about the uncomfortable situations Judge Nevarez had placed her in.
7. Judge Lisa A. Beebe (“Judge Beebe”), former Associate Judge of the 231st District Court, stated Laura B. Alexander, a family law attorney, spoke to her and Judge DeVos concerning Judge Nevarez’s sexually harassing conduct.
8. According to Judge Beebe, Ms. Alexander stated Judge Nevarez made several inappropriate and unwanted personal advances towards her which included: (1) providing Ms. Alexander with his personal cell phone number after a hearing; (2) suggesting that she contact him on his personal cell phone; and (3) sending her a personal message on Facebook.
9. Also, Judge Beebe explained Ms. Alexander had a 9:00 a.m. hearing set before Judge Nevarez on a Motion to Enter a Final Decree of Divorce, which she had incorrectly calendared for 10:00 a.m. Judge Nevarez conducted the hearing without Ms. Alexander’s presence and without attempting to contact her, which is not the practice in Tarrant County family law courts. When Ms. Alexander arrived at the Court, Judge Nevarez told her that he might not have conducted the hearing without notifying her or without her presence if she had contacted him on his personal cell phone. Ms. Alexander perceived what Judge Nevarez said as retribution for her failure to respond to his personal advances.
10. Ms. Alexander told Judge Beebe that Judge Nevarez’s consistent personal advances towards her became so pronounced that she does not enter his courtroom without being accompanied by her paralegal or another attorney.
11. During his informal appearance, Judge Nevarez testified that him and Judge DeVos met in law school and had a friendship before she was sworn in as the Associate Judge in the 231st District Court. However, when Judge DeVos became Judge Nevarez’s subordinate, he failed to formalize their working relationship and treated Judge DeVos as a friend instead of a colleague.
12. Judge Nevarez testified his friendship with Judge DeVos changed in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, his deployment in the Texas State Guard, and the workload.
13. Judge Nevarez told Judge DeVos that she looked “very nice,” and “I like it. It looks good,” when she wore dresses to work. Judge Nevarez asserted he made these comments because Judge DeVos did not consistently wear appropriate court attire. Judge Nevarez never

discussed Judge DeVos' alleged informal court attire with her or to Human Resources, instead choosing to "assure her of her appearance."

14. Judge Nevarez admitted he has a forty-year pattern of referring to women, including members of his court staff, female attorneys while he is sitting on the bench, and waitresses, as "babe," "babes," "hon," "baby," and "beautiful."
15. Judge Nevarez testified he was never informed that calling women "babe," "babes," "hon," "baby," and "beautiful," or that any of his other actions made women feel sexually harassed.
16. Judge Nevarez testified multiple times that he needed to be informed that such words and actions were inappropriate, and that Judge DeVos never communicated with him about her feelings of discomfort. Judge Nevarez's assertion is inconsistent with Judge DeVos' account, in which she expressed she tried to communicate her feelings of discomfort to Judge Nevarez. In response, Judge Nevarez told her "Not to flatter herself." As a result, Judge DeVos tried to avoid Judge Nevarez.
17. Judge Nevarez testified that before Judge DeVos provided her resignation, he felt her pulling away and said multiple times he felt like he was "losing her."
18. Judge Nevarez denied sexually harassing Ms. Alexander. However, Judge Nevarez admitted to providing his personal cell phone number to Ms. Alexander so she could contact him at the courthouse if she needed help. Also, he admitted to sending her a personal Facebook message.
19. Judge Nevarez asserted he provides attorneys with his cell phone number so they may ask him questions. He stated all he wanted to do was try to mentor Ms. Alexander and every other attorney in his courtroom.
20. Judge Nevarez also denied telling Ms. Alexander he might not have conducted a hearing without her present or attempted to contact her if she had contacted him on his personal cell phone. However, Judge Nevarez stated he normally resets cases if an attorney is not present or tries to have someone reach the missing attorney.
21. Despite admitting to calling female attorneys, female staff, and Judge DeVos "babe," "babes," "hon," "baby," and "beautiful," Judge Nevarez denies these actions constitute sexual harassment.
22. Since receiving the complaint from the Commission, Judge Nevarez testified: (1) he has informed staff that they need to refer to him as "Judge"; (2) only speaks to attorneys in chambers if there are multiple people present and leaves his office door open; (3) tries not to call people "babe," "babes," "hon," "baby," or "beautiful"; and (4) has hired a male court coordinator and male associate judge.
23. Judge Nevarez asserted he hired a male court coordinator and male associate judge to replace the female staff previously in those positions because his former court coordinator and Judge DeVos recommended the individuals.
24. Judge Nevarez has not taken sexual harassment training since receiving the complaint and testified he has only attended sexual harassment training twice in the eleven years he has been a District Judge.

RELEVANT STANDARDS AND AUTHORITIES

1. Canon 3B(4) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part: “A judge shall be patient, dignified, and courteous to...lawyers and others with whom the judge deals in an official capacity...”
2. Canon 3B(6) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct provides, in relevant part: “A judge shall not, in the performance of judicial duties, by words or conduct manifest bias or prejudice including but not limited to bias or prejudice based upon sex...”
3. Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution provides, in relevant part, a judge shall not engage in “willful or persistent conduct that is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of his duties or casts public discredit upon the judiciary or administration of justice.”

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 Jesus Nevarez, the judge of the 231st District Court, in Fort Worth, Tarrant County, Texas, should be publicly warned and ordered to obtain additional education for: (1) failing to be patient, dignified and courteous towards Judge DeVos and Ms. Alexander, a family law attorney, in which he dealt with in his official capacity when he engaged in sexually harassing conduct towards them; and (2) manifesting bias or prejudice by word or conduct based upon sex when he: (a) made unwanted complimentary comments towards Judge DeVos, his female Associate Judge, regarding her attire and appearance; (b) texted Judge DeVos late into the evening; (c) referred to Judge DeVos as “babe,” “babes,” “hon,” “baby,” and “beautiful”; (d) told Judge DeVos that he loves her; (e) provided Ms. Alexander, a female attorney, with his personal cell phone number; (f) personally messaged Ms. Alexander on Facebook; (g) told Ms. Alexander he would not have conducted a hearing without her present if she had contacted him on his personal cell phone; and (h) referred to his female staff members and female attorneys from the bench as “babe,” “babes,” “hon,” “baby,” and “beautiful.” Judge Nevarez’s failure in these respects constituted willful and persistent conduct that is clearly inconsistent with the proper performance of his duties and cast public discredit upon the judiciary or the administration of justice, in violation of Canons 3B(4) and 3B(6) of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct and Article V, Section 1-a(6)A of the Texas Constitution.

Pursuant to this Order, Judge Nevarez must obtain **four (4) hours** of instruction with a mentor, in addition to his required annual judicial education for Fiscal Year 2024. In particular, the Commission desires that Judge Nevarez receive: (1) **two (2) hours** of this additional education in the area of demeanor; and (2) **two (2) hours** of this additional education in the area of sexual harassment. 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 Center of the Judiciary to the extent necessary to enable that entity to assign the appropriate mentor for Judge Nevarez.

Judge Nevarez shall complete the additional **four (4) 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 Nevarez’s 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 21 day of June, 2024.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary L. Steel", written over a horizontal line.

Gary L. Steel
Chairman, State Commission on Judicial Conduct