

BEFORE THE HEARING BOARD  
OF THE  
ILLINOIS ATTORNEY REGISTRATION  
AND DISCIPLINARY COMMISSION

In the Matter of:

MARGARET JEAN LOWERY,  
  
Attorney-Respondent,  
  
No. 6271777.

Commission No. 2020PR00018

COMPLAINT

Jerome Larkin, Administrator of the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission, by his attorney, Peter L. Rotskoff, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 753(b), complains of Respondent Margaret Jean Lowery, who was licensed to practice law in Illinois on July 21, 2000, and alleges that Respondent has engaged in the following conduct which subjects her to discipline pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 770:

COUNT I

*(False and/or reckless statements about the qualifications or integrity of a judge on website firetheliarjudge.com)*

1. On or about September 11, 2018, Respondent purchased the domain name “firetheliarjudge.com” from GoDaddy, and used GoDaddy to create a website for “firetheliarjudge.com”.

2. Respondent created the *firetheliarjudge.com* website as part of an anti-retention campaign against Judge Andrew Gleeson, the Chief Judge of the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, who was running for retention in the November 6, 2018 general election.

3. Respondent linked the *firetheliarjudge.com* website to a Facebook page entitled “Madeline M. Dinmont”. Madeline M. Dinmont was a fictitious name created and used by Respondent.

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4. In or around October 2018, Lori Friess (“Friess”) organized an anti-retention campaign against another judge in the 20<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit, Judge Zina Cruse. Friess called the campaign “Justice For Kane”, in recognition of her two year-old grandson, Kane Friess-Wiley, who had been killed in April 2017. Friess’ daughter’s former boyfriend, Gyasi Campbell (“Campbell”), had been charged with Kane’s murder. On April 2, 2018, Judge Cruse reduced Campbell’s bond from \$1 million to \$150,000 which allowed Campbell to post bond and be released from custody pending trial.

5. On or around October 4, 2018, Respondent posted the following entry on the *firetheliarjudge.com* website:

**A FAILURE TO VOTE IS A YES VOTE ON RETENTION!**

Kane’s founder has a vendetta against a judge who followed the law.

**Why Judge Gleeson Must Go!**

Judge Zina Cruse is a female African American Judge from East St. Louis. The Justice For Kane anti-retention campaign is the brain child of Gleeson & others to run a female minority judge off the bench in order to preserve their white male privilege.

6. Respondent’s statements described above, that the Justice For Kane anti-retention campaign was the “brain child” of Judge Gleeson and others and Judge Gleeson wanted to run a female minority judge off the bench to preserve his white male privilege was false because Judge Gleeson had no involvement in the Justice For Kane group or any group or effort seeking to remove Judge Cruse from the bench.

7. Respondent knew her statements described in paragraph 5, above, were false at the time she made them and posted them to the *firetheliarjudge.com* website or she made them with reckless disregard as to their truth or falsity.

8. On or about October 4, 2018, Respondent posted the following entry on the *firetheliarjudge.com* website:

JFK [Justice For Kane] is a WHITE SUPREMACIST GROUP!

JKF is a front for a WHITE SUPREMACIST GROUP called the National Association for Majority Equality which Judge Gleeson supports. That is why they are targeting judges of color and that is why their members are *[sic]* exclusively white.

9. Respondent's statement that Judge Gleeson supports a white supremacist group called the National Association for Majority Equality ("NAME") was false because Judge Gleeson did not support or have any involvement with NAME or any white supremacist group or with the Justice For Kane campaign.

10. Respondent knew her statement described in paragraph 8, above, was false at the time she made it or she made it with reckless disregard as to its truth or falsity.

11. By reason of the conduct outlined above, Respondent has engaged in the following misconduct:

- a. making statements the lawyer knows to be false or with reckless disregard as to their truth or falsity concerning the qualifications or integrity of a judge, adjudicative officer, or public legal officer by making the statements set forth in paragraphs 5 and 8, above, in violation of Rule 8.2(a) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

## COUNT II

*(False and or reckless statements about the qualifications or integrity of a judge on Facebook page entitled "Madeline M. Dinmont")*

The Administrator realleges and incorporates paragraphs 1 through 10, of Count I above.

12. On or before September 14, 2015, Respondent created a Facebook page entitled "Madeline M. Dinmont" ("Dinmont page"). Respondent used the fictitious name Madeline Dinmont in her interactions with GoDaddy concerning the *firetheliarjudge.com* website.

13. On or about October 5, 2018, Respondent posted the following entry on the Dinmont page:

Gleeson is part of the St. Clair County Secret Order of the Hibernians. That's why he uses the Irish clover. Wanna [sic] guess how many of its members are persons of color? None.  
Wanna [sic] see Gleeson in his "chief" regalia?

Respondent then posted a photograph of a Klu Klux Klansman dressed in a white robe and hood with the name tag "Gleeson" pinned to his chest over an Irish clover. The picture also depicted a noose and a confederate flag and was captioned "Vote No Retention!" (see *Exhibit 1* attached)

14. Respondent's posts described in paragraph 13, above, were false because Judge Gleeson was not a member or part of a "secret order of the Hibernians", he was not a member of the Klu Klux Klan, and the person depicted by Respondent on the Dinmont page was not Judge Gleeson.

15. Respondent knew her postings described in paragraph 13, above, were false at the time she made them or she made them with reckless disregard as to their truth or falsity.

16. By reason of the conduct outlined above, Respondent has engaged in the following misconduct:

- a. making statements the lawyer knows to be false or with reckless disregard as to their truth or falsity concerning the qualifications or integrity of a judge, adjudicative officer, or public legal officer by making the statements set forth in paragraph 13, above, in violation of Rule 8.2(a) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

COUNT III  
(*False statements to the Administrator*)

The Administrator realleges and incorporates paragraphs 1 through 15, of Counts I and II above.

17. On July 2, 2019, Respondent appeared at the Springfield ARDC office to provide sworn testimony related to matters described in this complaint.

18. During the sworn statement, Respondent was asked the following questions and gave the following answers:

Q: Okay. What do you know about the website firetheliarjudge.com?

A: It was a website set up for the anti-retention campaign

Q: And who set it up?

A: I don't know.

Q: What role did you have in creating either the website or the domain name?

A: I was asked how you go about setting up a domain name and I suggested that they go through GoDaddy.

Q: When you say you were asked, who asked you?

A: Judge Duebbert.

Q: Okay. So did Judge Duebbert set up this website firetheliarjudge.com?

A: I don't know if he did it or if he had somebody else do it.

Q: You had no involvement in setting up the site?

A: No, and I didn't manage it either.

Q: Have you ever posted anything to the site firetheliarjudge.com?

A: No.

19. Respondent's statement above that she did not know who set up the *firetheliarjudge.com* website was false because Respondent set up and paid for the website through GoDaddy.

20. Respondent's statement above that she did not manage the website was false because she managed the website, she linked it to the Dinmont page and she linked it to another website she created entitled "firejudgegleeson.com".

21. Respondent's statement above that she never posted anything on the *firetheliarjudge.com* website was false because she made posts on the website, including the conduct described in Counts I and II in this complaint.

22. Respondent knew that her statements described in paragraphs 19 through 21, above, were false at the time she made them.

23. During the sworn statement on July 2, 2019, Respondent was asked the following questions and gave the following answers:

Q: Okay. So my question is with regard to these entries on firetheliarjudge.com, did you have anything to do with creating, making, or responding to these entries?

A: No. I tried to help them set it up and then it was taken over by somebody who was a non-lawyer.

Q: Okay. And when you said you tried to help them set it up, who are you talking about?

A: Well, the people that were involved in the anti-retention campaign by telling them you can go to GoDaddy and they have templates, that kind of thing.

Q: Okay. And who was that? Who specifically are you talking about?

A: It was Judge Duebbert and his web person.

Q: Who was that?

A: I don't know. I don't even know when this was set up.

Q: Were you the domain – did you own the domain name firetheliarjudge.com?

A: No.

Q: Did you set it up?

A: No, but I tried to help them set it up.

Q: Well, specifically what does that mean?

A: To get into GoDaddy and set up an account.

Q: But you didn't set up the account at GoDaddy?

A: No, nor did I have control over it.

Q: Do you know what e-mail address they used when they set up the *firetheliarjudge.com*?

A: I don't.

Q: Do you know if they used Madeline Dinmont's e-mail address?

A: I don't know.

24. Respondent's statement above that she had no role in creating, making or responding to entries on the website *firetheliarjudge.com* was false because she did create the website and she did make various postings to the website as described in Counts I and II above.

25. Respondent's statements above that she did not know when the website *firetheliarjudge.com* was set up and that she did not own the domain name "firetheliarjudge.com" were false because she set up and paid for the domain name and website *firetheliarjudge.com* through GoDaddy on or about September 11, 2018.

26. Respondent's statements above that she did not set up or "have control" over the *firetheliarjudge.com* website were false because Respondent set up and controlled the domain name and website using her GoDaddy account.

27. Respondent knew that her statements described in paragraphs 24 through 26, above, were false at the time she made them.

28. By reason of the conduct outlined above, Respondent has engaged in the following misconduct:

- a. knowingly making a false statement of material fact in connection with a disciplinary matter by making the false statements described in paragraphs 19 through 21 and 24 through 26, above, in violation of Rule 8.1(a) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010); and
- b. conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation by making the false statements described in paragraphs 19 through 21 and 24 through 26, above, in violation of Rule 8.4(c) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

#### COUNT IV

*(False or reckless statements about the qualifications or integrity of a judge - GoDaddy)*

The Administrator realleges and incorporates paragraphs 1 through 27, of Counts I, II and III above.

29. On September 17, 2018, Respondent contacted GoDaddy customer service concerning the website *firetheliarjudge.com*. Respondent identified herself to the operator as Madeline Dinmont. Respondent also identified herself as the administrator of the website *firetheliarjudge.com*.

30. During the telephone conversation, Respondent told the operator that she wanted to pay for the *firetheliarjudge.com* website through PayPal on a “month to month” basis because she would not need the site to be operational after the November 5, 2018 general election.

31. During the telephone conversation, the following exchange occurred:

Operator: That’s why you want to go month to month?

Respondent: Yeah.

Operator: Makes sense,

Respondent: Because the election will be over the 5<sup>th</sup>.

Operator: Yeah. And you hope these people read it and do the right thing, right?

Respondent: If only you knew.



Operator: I was glancing through the website, so I hear you.

Respondent: No. I mean, it's not a very nice person [Judge Gleeson]. And he's done a lot of things to hurt a lot of people. So that's part of the reason that we're getting all the crank calls.

Operator: That's too bad.

Respondent: You know, this part of the United States, politics is a blood sport.

Operator: True.

Respondent: I mean, I will tell you how evil it is. They've attempted to set up another judge of a different political party for murder if that tells you anything.

Operator: Wow.

Respondent: And this is the guy who orchestrated it.

Operator: That's crazy.

Respondent: So we had the Department of Justice in here. No, I'm not kidding you.

Operator: You wonder how people like that stay elected.

Respondent: Well, that's what we're working on. And frankly, I've never practiced law in a jurisdiction where it was like this.

32. Respondent's statements in paragraph 31, above, that Judge Gleeson "orchestrated" an attempt to set up another judge for murder were false because Judge Gleeson never engaged in the conduct which Respondent described to the operator.

33. Respondent knew her statements in paragraph 31, above, were false or she made them in reckless disregard of their truth or falsity.

34. By reason of the conduct outlined above, Respondent has engaged in the following misconduct:

- a. making statements the lawyer knows to be false or with reckless disregard as to their truth or falsity concerning the qualifications or integrity of a judge, adjudicative officer, or public legal officer by making the statements set forth in paragraph 31, above, in violation of Rule 8.2(a) of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct (2010).

WHEREFORE, the Administrator respectfully requests that this matter be assigned to a panel of the Hearing Board, that a hearing be held, and that the panel make findings of fact, conclusions of fact and law, and a recommendation for such discipline as is warranted.

Respectfully submitted,

Jerome Larkin, Administrator  
Attorney Registration and  
Disciplinary Commission

By: /s/ Peter L. Rotskoff  
Peter L. Rotskoff

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## EXHIBIT 1



Vote No Retention!

