

NEWS FROM:

Supreme Court of Tennessee
Administrative Office of the Courts

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Elizabeth Sykes, Director
Tim Townsend, Deputy Director

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

April 9, 2009

Today at 12:00 noon, CDT, the Tennessee Court of the Judiciary issued the following:

PUBLIC REPRIMAND

The Honorable John W. Walton
900 East Elk Avenue
 Elizabethtown, TN 37643

RE: Complaint of Leslie C. Sharpe against
Judge John W. Walton

Dear Judge Walton:

This shall serve as a public letter reprimand pursuant to your agreement with the Investigative Panel of this Court.

The reprimand relates to statements which you made as a judge in open court and/or in the public areas of the clerk's office about General Sessions Clerk employees. You made these statements in a demeaning and disrespectful manner. One such comment was made concerning Leslie C. Sharpe. Ms. Sharpe's maiden name was Leslie C. Hill. On one occasion in open court during a proceeding, you called Ms. Hill "Liar Hill" and demeaned her professional capabilities as an employee of the General Sessions Court Clerk's office saying that she was incompetent. On another occasion you made reference to Lore Carr as "Dora Dumb" or "Dumb Dora." Ms. Carr is also an employee of the General Sessions Clerk's office and these comments were made in the presence of others. These comments were demeaning and belittling of each of these employees and were inappropriate. Your actions in this regard violated Canon 3B(4) requiring a judge to be patient, dignified and courteous to litigants, jurors, witnesses, lawyers and others with whom the judge deals in an official capacity. This conduct also violates Canon 2 of the Code of

Walton Public Reprimand
April 9, 2009
Page 2 of 2

Judicial Conduct requiring a judge to act in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the Judiciary.

Thus, this letter serves as a public letter reprimand and will be appropriately filed and disseminated. We are now closing our file on this matter. We greatly appreciate your cooperation with our Disciplinary Counsel and this Court throughout this process.

Sincerely yours,

Don. R. Ash
Presiding Judge

DRA/mpm
cc: Disciplinary Counsel
Investigative Panel