

BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT
OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON

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COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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In Re the Matter of
Former Judge Steven Sowards,
Battleground Municipal Court

No. 4738-F-123

**STIPULATION, AGREEMENT
AND ORDER OF CLOSURE**


Pursuant to Article IV, Section 31 of the Washington Constitution, Chapter 2.64 RCW, and CJCRP, the Washington Commission on Judicial Conduct ("Commission") and former Battleground Municipal Court Judge Steven Sowards ("Respondent") hereby stipulate and agree as follows:

1. Respondent was a part-time Municipal Court Judge in the City of Battleground, Clark County, Washington from April 1, 2003, to June 16, 2005.
2. The Commission has reason to commence an investigation pursuant to its constitutional authority based upon information concerning the conduct of Respondent. Such conduct, if established, would support a determination that Respondent has violated the Code of Judicial Conduct. Respondent does not dispute that the Commission, if it can establish violations of the Code, can take appropriate action under Article IV, Section 31 of the Washington Constitution. The Commission has information that while serving as a part-time municipal court judge, Respondent permitted or failed to prevent posting of potentially undignified materials of himself and a family member on a site on the Internet that could be embarrassing to him and thereby bring the judiciary into disrepute. The materials in question did not identify Respondent by name, nor refer to his judicial position.
3. Respondent resigned from his position as Judge of the Municipal Court as of June 16, 2005, is not performing judicial functions, and has not served in a judicial capacity since that date, including pro tem service.
4. Respondent agrees that following the execution of the Stipulation, he shall not

1 seek or serve in any position performing judicial functions without first securing
 2 approval from the Commission in the manner provided in CJCRP 28, or its successor
 3 or replacement. Respondent further agrees that should Respondent seek any position
 4 involving judicial or quasi-judicial functions, the Commission may reopen this case for
 5 further prosecution, and in addition, release information to a government agency or
 6 judicial qualifications organization pursuant to CJCRP 11(b)(1)(A) and 11(b)(7), or their
 7 successors or replacements.

8 5. The Commission shall close this matter without further proceedings, effective
 9 September 9, 2005.

10 6. This Stipulation shall not become effective until approved by the Commission
 11 on Judicial Conduct. If the Stipulation is not accepted, the matter will proceed as
 12 though this Stipulation was not entered into.

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 14  9/6/05
 Steven Sowards Date

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 17 _____ Date
 18 For the Commission on Judicial Conduct
 J. Reiko Callner, Senior Investigative Officer

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Steven Sowards

Date

Barrie Althoff

Barrie Althoff
Executive Director

September 2, 2005

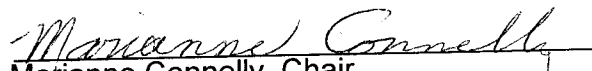
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ORDER

Based upon the Stipulation of Respondent Steven Sowards set forth above, the Commission hereby orders closure of this proceeding effective September 9, 2005.

Dated this 9th day of September, 2005.


Marianne Connelly, Chair
Commission on Judicial Conduct