

**FILED**

**AUG 06 2003**

**A.C.J.C.**

SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON  
JUDICIAL CONDUCT

DOCKET NO: ACJC 2002-111

---

IN THE MATTER OF : FORMAL COMPLAINT  
: :  
E. RONALD WRIGHT, :  
JUDGE OF THE MUNICIPAL COURT :  
:

---

Patrick J. Monahan, Jr., Secretary, Advisory Committee on Judicial Conduct  
("Complainant"), complaining of Municipal Court Judge E. Ronald Wright ("Respondent"),  
says:

1. Respondent is a member of the Bar of the State of New Jersey, having been admitted to the practice of law in 1973.
2. At all times relevant to this matter, Respondent held the part-time position of Judge of the Municipal Court of New Brunswick, a position that he continues to hold.
3. At all times relevant to this matter, Respondent had an office for the practice of law in New Brunswick, as he was permitted to do because of his status as a part-time municipal court judge.
4. On October 12, 2001, Joseph Maimone was driving in Montgomery Township when he received a summons for throwing a cigarette from his vehicle, in violation of N.J.S.A. 39:4-64.
5. Joseph Maimone appeared in the Montgomery Township Municipal Court on December 18, 2001, and entered a plea of not guilty. His case was carried to January 29, 2002.

6. Joseph Maimone was and is the nephew of Sandra Romanko, who was and is the long-time secretary/administrative assistant to Respondent in his private practice of law.

7. On January 29, 2002, Sandra Romanko informed Respondent that her nephew had received the aforementioned summons and would be returning to the Montgomery Township Municipal Court that evening in the hope of obtaining an amendment of the charge against him to one of violation of a municipal ordinance. Ms. Romanko asked Respondent to call the municipal prosecutor on Maimone's behalf.

8. In response to Ms. Romanko's request, Respondent placed a telephone call to the private law office of Kim Augustus Otis, Esq., who had recently been appointed Municipal Prosecutor of Montgomery Township.

9. Respondent did not reach Mr. Otis in that telephone call. He left a message in which he identified himself as a municipal court judge and as attorney for the Maimone family. He said that Joseph Maimone would be appearing in the Montgomery Township Municipal Court that evening, and he asked if Mr. Otis could extend any consideration to Mr. Maimone.

10. When Mr. Otis received Respondent's message later that afternoon, he returned the call and spoke to Respondent. Respondent identified himself in that conversation as an attorney and a judge in New Brunswick, and he said that he represented the Maimones, that Joseph Maimone would be appearing in the Montgomery Township Municipal Court that evening, and that he was not sure exactly what the charge was against Maimone but thought it would be appropriate for the charge to be amended to that of violation of a municipal ordinance.

11. By making a telephone call to Mr. Otis on behalf of a defendant in a case pending before the court where Mr. Otis was municipal prosecutor, Respondent violated Rule

1:15-1(b), which prohibits an attorney who is a judge of a municipal court from practicing in any quasi-criminal or penal matter, whether judicial or administrative in nature.

12. By identifying himself as a judge in his call to Otis' office and in his subsequent conversation with Otis and by asking that Otis extend consideration to Joseph Maimone, Respondent violated Canon 2B of the Code of Judicial Conduct, which prohibits judges from lending the prestige of office to advance the private interests of others.

13. Respondent's conduct also violated Canons 1 and 2A of the Code of Judicial Conduct and constituted conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute, in violation of Rule 2:15-8(a)(6).

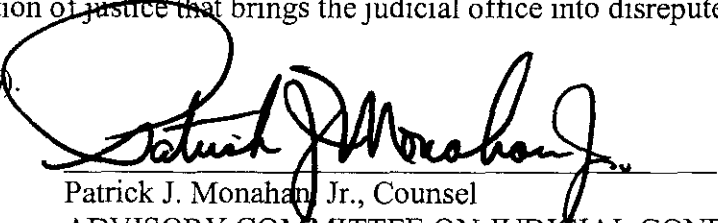
WHEREFORE, Complainant charges that Respondent has, by the conduct set forth above, violated the following Canons of the Code of Judicial Conduct:

Canon 1, which requires judges to personally observe high standards of conduct so that the integrity and independence of the judiciary may be preserved;

Canon 2A, which requires judges to respect and comply with the law and to act at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary; and

Canon 2B, which prohibits judges from lending the prestige of office to advance the private interests of others.

Complainant also charges that Respondent's conduct constitutes conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice that brings the judicial office into disrepute, in violation of Rule 2:15-8(a)(6).



Patrick J. Monahan, Jr., Counsel  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT  
Hughes Justice Complex  
P.O. Box 037  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
(609) 292-2552