



NAACP

PENNSYLVANIA STATE CONFERENCE

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 7, 2020
Allegheny County

CONTACT: Kenneth L. Huston
412-287-9507

Email: pastatepresident2019@gmail.com

BANNED FROM HEARING CASES

When a defendant goes before a Court of Common Pleas judge in a case, the expectation is that the judge and all who are involved with the process will act with integrity, respect, and in accordance with the protocol of the courts. However, Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas Judge Mark Tranquilli recently presiding over a particular case, appeared to be very comfortable in expressing his racist biases when speaking to the attorneys on both sides allegedly referencing a Black female juror as “Aunt Jemima.” Additionally, with being extremely unhappy with the decision of the jury when a defendant was found not guilty of charges, this same judge allegedly spoke very derogatory and once again did not hesitate to express his extreme biases that clearly reflects his racist attitudes.

The NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference commends the defense attorney for having the courage to file a complaint with the Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania which has the responsibility of reviewing, investigating, and determining the discipline in a finding of judicial misconduct. Although there is a process by which the Judicial Conduct Board must follow, President Judge Kim Berkley Clark has in fact issued a court order prohibiting this judge from hearing cases until the Conduct Board comes to a decision in the complaint.

Kenneth L. Huston, President of the NAACP Pennsylvania State Conference strongly calls for the Judicial Conduct Board of Pennsylvania to thoroughly examine the allegations of the egregious conduct of Judge Tranquilli not only in the most recent case he presided over, but also other cases whereby this judge may have exhibited the same behavior. Any judge who feels it proper to act so inappropriately, violating the rules of conduct which jeopardizes the integrity of the criminal justice system, must be disciplined in a way that prohibits him from future judicial service in the courts of Pennsylvania. Findings must move for a full board review of the complaint concluding “clear and convincing evidence” of judicial misconduct. The NAACP will follow the progression of the investigation and hope that the Judicial Conduct Board will in fact find Judge Tranquilli guilty of the allegations charged within the complaint filed against him. Every judge has an ethical responsibility to behave with the highest integrity as indicated by the Code of Conduct in the Pennsylvania Constitution and behavior that constitutes blatant implicit and explicit biases cannot ever be tolerated.

###

Founded in 1909, the NAACP is the nation’s oldest and largest nonpartisan civil rights organization. Its members throughout the United States and the world are the premier advocates for civil rights in their communities. The Pennsylvania State Conference was established in 1934 and pursues the same mission throughout the Commonwealth.