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STATE OF ILLINOIS  
JUDICIAL INQUIRY BOARD

**PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 7, 2017

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**JUDICIAL INQUIRY BOARD FILES COMPLAINT AGAINST ROBERT J. STEIGMANN, APPELLATE JUDGE, FOURTH DISTRICT OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS**

On August 7, 2017, the Illinois Judicial Inquiry Board filed a Complaint with the Illinois Courts Commission against Robert J. Steigmann, Appellate Judge, Fourth District of the State of Illinois, charging Respondent with conduct that was prejudicial to the administration of justice and brought the judicial office into disrepute.

The Complaint alleges that beginning in-or about February 2015, and continuing in or about November 2016, Respondent used official court letterhead, computer equipment, and staff to solicit paid lecturing opportunities from law enforcement organizations, medical societies, and hospitals. The Complaint also alleges - in doing so - Respondent used the prestige of his judicial office as well as the court's resources to advance his private interests. The Complaint further alleges that Respondent's conduct created a potential for an appearance that he is biased in favor of physicians and law enforcement with respect to matters involving those professions. The Board's trial counsel, Attorney John N. Gallo, Attorney Kevin M. Fee, and Attorney Elizabeth H. Jordan, of Sidley Austin LLP, will prosecute the Complaint.

**-ATTACHED IS A COPY OF THE COMPLAINT-**

COURTS COMMISSION OF THE  
STATE OF ILLINOIS

In re ROBERT J. STEIGMANN,  
Appellate Judge, Fourth District  
of the State of Illinois

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No. 17-CC-1 AUG 07 2017

**FILED**

  
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Courts Commission Secretary

COMPLAINT

Pursuant to Section 15(c) of Article VI of the Constitution of the State of Illinois, the Illinois Judicial Inquiry Board (“Board”) complains against Justice Robert J. Steigmann, Appellate Judge, Fourth District (“Respondent”), and charges Respondent with conduct that was prejudicial to the administration of justice and that brought the judicial office into disrepute.

SUMMARY OF ALLEGATIONS

1. Beginning in or about February 2015, and continuing through in or about November 2016, Respondent used official court letterhead, computer equipment, and staff to solicit paid lecturing opportunities from law enforcement organizations, medical societies, and hospitals. In doing so, Respondent used the prestige of his judicial office as well as the court’s resources to advance his private interests. This conduct also created a potential for an appearance that he is biased in favor of physicians and law enforcement with respect to matters involving those professions.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

2. Respondent is an Appellate Court Judge of the Fourth District of Illinois.
3. In 1976, Respondent was elected judge of the Circuit Court for the Sixth Judicial Circuit of Illinois. He presided there until he was assigned to the Fourth District of Illinois Appellate Court in 1989. In 1994, he was elected to the Fourth District of Illinois Appellate Court. He was retained for two additional ten year terms—first in 2004, and again in 2014.

4. On February 6, 2015, Respondent presented a lecture to a police department entitled, "Legal Tips for Police Officers."

5. Beginning no later than May 18, 2015, Respondent initiated contact with law-enforcement organizations in an effort to offer to lecture in exchange for compensation. Respondent did so by mailing solicitation letters on official court letterhead in which he made known his judicial position.

6. For example, in a letter sent to the Illinois Law Enforcement Training and Standards Board on May 18, 2015, Respondent wrote: "For the April 10 presentation I gave [to] the Champaign Police Department, I charged \$1,250, which is also the same amount I agreed to receive for my next presentation." He specified that he would be agreeable to making presentations for fiscal year 2016 for the \$1,250 figure, but that rate would likely increase to \$1,700 once he demonstrated "the value of these programs."

7. In another letter, dated June 8, 2016, and sent via email to a director for law enforcement training, Respondent stated, "I charge an honorarium of \$1,250 for this program and wish to be reimbursed for overnight lodging the night before and for travel at the current state rate. Given the value I bring to these presentations, I think I am a cheap date."

8. As a result of such solicitations, Respondent presented "Legal Tips for Police Officers" at least fifteen times to various law enforcement organizations across the State of Illinois between February 2015 and November 2016.

9. Respondent charged, and was paid, \$1,250 for each of his police department lectures after February 2015.

10. Since 2015, Respondent has not solicited or sought out opportunities to present to criminal defense lawyers.

18. At least one of these presentations, given on Thursday, November 12, 2015, was entitled "The Real Story about Medical Malpractice Litigation and the Special Protections the Law Provides for Doctors and Other Health-Care Providers."

19. Respondent charged, and was paid, \$800 for each of his medical-society presentations (excepting one, for which he charged and was paid \$400).

20. Since 2015, Respondent has not solicited or sought out opportunities to present to plaintiffs' attorneys in the area of malpractice.

21. Respondent did not seek the permission of his presiding judge before giving these presentations or using official court letterhead to solicit and promote them.

22. As a result of the presentations, Respondent was paid no less than \$24,300 in excess of his judicial compensation.

23. Respondent's conduct was prejudicial to the administration of justice and brought the judicial office into disrepute.

#### VIOLATIONS

24. Through the above-described conduct, Respondent failed to personally maintain high standards of conduct so that the integrity and independence of the judiciary may be preserved; failed to conduct himself in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary; failed to avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety in his judicial activities; failed to refrain from financial and business dealings that tended to reflect adversely on his impartiality, exploit his judicial position and involve him in frequent transactions with persons likely to come before the court in which he serves; and failed to refrain from assuming an active role in the management of a business. In so doing, Respondent violated:

COUNT ONE

- a. the Code of Judicial Conduct, Illinois Supreme Court Rule 61, which provides:

An independent and honorable judiciary is indispensable to justice in our society. A judge should participate in establishing, maintaining, and enforcing, and should personally observe, high standards of conduct so that the integrity and independence of the judiciary may be preserved. The provisions of this Code should be construed and applied to further that objective.

COUNT TWO

- b. the Code of Judicial Conduct, Illinois Supreme Court Rule 62, Canon 2,

which provides in pertinent part:

(A) A judge should . . . conduct himself or herself at all times in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary.

(B) A judge should not allow the judge's family, social or other relationships to influence the judge's judicial conduct or judgment.

COUNT THREE

- c. The Code of Judicial Conduct, Illinois Supreme Court Rule 65, Canon 5, which

provides in pertinent part:

(C)(1) A judge should refrain from financial and business dealings that tend to reflect adversely on the judge's impartiality, interfere with the proper performance of the judge's judicial duties, exploit the judge's judicial position, or involve the judge in frequent transactions with lawyers or persons likely to come before the court on which the judge serves.

(C)(2) A judge should not assume an active role in the management or serve as an officer, director, or employee of any business.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, the Judicial Inquiry Board, charging that the above-described conduct of Justice Steigmann constitutes conduct that was prejudicial to the administration of justice and

conduct that brought the judicial office into disrepute, prays that the Illinois Courts Commission, after notice of public hearing, make such order in accordance with Section 15 of Article VI of the Illinois Constitution as the Commission may deem appropriate.

Dated: August 7, 2017

Respectfully submitted,

JUDICIAL INQUIRY BOARD  
OF THE STATE OF ILLINOIS

By: 

One of its attorneys

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