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On April 3, 2016, Limestone County's newest District-Court Judge, Douglas Patterson, swore to "faithfully and honestly discharge the duties of the Office of District Judge, Place One." A scant 32 days later, Patterson used his position as District Judge to steal \$7,500 from a juvenile fund. We now know that he stole more than \$95,000, including more than \$47,000 from the juvenile fund and more than \$47,000 from a disabled Marine veteran confined to a nursing home. Patterson committed these crimes while acting as a court-appointed conservator and later as a District Judge.

If only I could say that the discovery of Patterson's crimes marked the end of the damage he did to Limestone County. Unfortunately, however, it was merely the beginning of the fallout to this community's judicial branch. Following the discovery of his crimes, Patterson embarked on a year-long odyssey of lies, deceit, delay, and character assassination. He attacked the indictment, the Grand Jury, the Presiding Judge who reported his crimes, his own attorney, the authority of the Judicial Inquiry Commission to prosecute him, and the constitutionality of the ethics laws under which he was indicted. Patterson deliberately used his legal filings and the media to harm the reputation and the integrity of the court along with its officials and dedicated employees. The long-term effects of this conduct did not vanish with Patterson's guilty plea.

Patterson's gamesmanship also put the State of Alabama to enormous expense and effort to bring him to justice. I have seen nothing to indicate Patterson cared whatsoever about this fact. For example, Patterson signed a confession letter admitting to his crimes, only to later publicly disavow the letter in a deceitful effort to mislead the public and impugn the reputations of his attorney, Dan Totten, and the undersigned. This sort of conduct continued unabated for almost a year, all the while Patterson drew a salary in excess of \$10,000 per month. Patterson did zero work to earn this money, while Judges Wise and Huggins assumed Patterson's cases on top of their existing full caseloads. The Limestone County court system continued to do Patterson's job because these individuals and others worked hard. Meanwhile, Patterson did not spend one cent of the approximately \$100,000 of unearned income to repay his victims for the money that he stole from them.

Patterson continued to collect his unearned income until the eve of his trial before the Court of the Judiciary. Then, facing a mountain of evidence and a trial before his peers, Patterson submitted a resignation letter to Chief Justice Tom Parker. But Patterson was not content to go down without taking some parting shots. His self-serving resignation letter was a stunning display

of arrogance. He wrote that his resignation “should not be viewed in any way as an admission of guilt on my part;” that “he served the people and children of Limestone County well;” and that “[he left] knowing the children of Limestone County are much better served now than when [he] took office.” In sum, he openly mocked his victims, the public, and the entire judicial system.

Even after he resigned, Patterson, in this case, continued to file specious and meritless motions in a desperate attempt to avoid accountability for his actions. Thankfully, Your Honor methodically swept aside these motions and denied his multiple attempts to delay justice, including attempts to fire his lawyer and continue the trial setting. Finally, just two weeks prior to his trial, Patterson pleaded guilty.

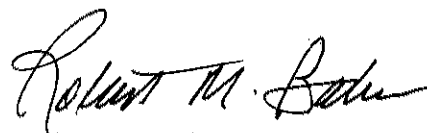
The circumstances and timing of Patterson’s guilty plea were hardly the result of a moral epiphany, but rather his attempt to avoid a trial which would have detailed his crimes and exposed other embarrassing details that he did not want made public. He pled, not because it was the right thing to do, but because the Attorney General’s Office had a rock-solid case against him, and all of his efforts to avoid justice had failed.

Having been a judge for nearly 20 years, I find it inconceivable that a fellow judge would knowingly and deliberately inflict such damage on the judiciary. Honest and hard-working judges throughout the state must now wear the stain of Patterson’s actions and betrayals. The public has watched with disgust and dismay over the past year, wondering whether the judiciary will actually hold one of its own accountable. For me, Patterson’s mockery of justice has been gut wrenching to endure. The public will judge the entire judicial system on how we discipline our own. Without the faith, confidence, and support of the public, the judiciary is powerless. The first step toward restoring the public’s faith and confidence is to demonstrate, through our actions, that we will hold elected officials, especially judges, accountable for their wrongdoing.

In conclusion, I respectfully submit that Patterson has demonstrated a complete lack of remorse for the damage that he has done to the public, to his victims, and to the judiciary. His recent mea culpa is too little, too late. Patterson has held himself above the law and dared anyone to do anything about it. Finally, the day of reckoning is here. On behalf of the court system, the victims, and the public, I respectfully submit that a lengthy sentence in the state penitentiary is appropriate, followed by a lengthy term of probation, as well as full restitution to all injured parties.

Thank you for your consideration.

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 NOV 30 2020
 BRAD CURNUTT, CLERK
 LIMESTONE COUNTY ALABAMA


 Robert M. Baker,
 Presiding Circuit Judge
 Limestone County, Alabama