

STATE OF NEW YORK  
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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In the Matter of the Proceeding  
Pursuant to Section 44, subdivision 4,  
of the Judiciary Law in Relation to

**WALTER W. JONES,**

a Justice of the Canandaigua Town Court,  
Ontario County.

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**NOTICE OF FORMAL  
WRITTEN COMPLAINT**

NOTICE is hereby given to Respondent, Walter W. Jones, a Justice of the Canandaigua Town Court, Ontario County, pursuant to Section 44, subdivision 4, of the Judiciary Law, that the State Commission on Judicial Conduct has determined that cause exists to serve upon Respondent the annexed Formal Written Complaint; and that, in accordance with said statute, Respondent is requested within twenty (20) days of the service of the annexed Formal Written Complaint upon him to serve the Commission at its Rochester office, 400 Andrews Street, Suite 700, Rochester, New York 14604, with his verified Answer to the specific paragraphs of the Complaint.

Dated: April 3, 2025  
Albany, New York

**ROBERT H. TEMBECKJIAN**  
Administrator and Counsel  
State Commission on Judicial Conduct  
61 Broadway, Suite 1200  
New York, New York 10006  
(646) 386-4800

To: Charles D. Steinman, Esq.  
Attorney for Respondent  
217 Fairport Landing  
Fairport, New York 14450

STATE OF NEW YORK  
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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In the Matter of the Proceeding  
Pursuant to Section 44, subdivision 4,  
of the Judiciary Law in Relation to

**FORMAL  
WRITTEN COMPLAINT**

**WALTER W. JONES,**

a Justice of the Canandaigua Town Court,  
Ontario County.

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1. Article VI, Section 22, of the Constitution of the State of New York establishes a Commission on Judicial Conduct (“Commission”), and Section 44, subdivision 4, of the Judiciary Law empowers the Commission to direct that a Formal Written Complaint be drawn and served upon a judge.
2. The Commission has directed that a Formal Written Complaint be drawn and served upon Walter W. Jones (“Respondent”), a Justice of the Canandaigua Town Court, Ontario County.
3. The factual allegations set forth in Charges I and II state acts of judicial misconduct by Respondent in violation of the Rules of the Chief Administrator of the Courts Governing Judicial Conduct (“Rules”).
4. Respondent was admitted to the practice of law in New York in 1973. He has been a Justice of the Canandaigua Town Court, Ontario County, since 1999. Respondent’s current term expires on December 31, 2027.

## **CHARGE I**

5. On or about May 10, 2024, Respondent repeatedly used a racial trope during a conversation with court staff and an Assistant Public Defender in the parking lot of the Ontario County Jail in Canandaigua, New York.

### **Specifications to Charge I**

6. On or about May 10, 2024, after presiding over the Centralized Arraignment Part arraignments, Respondent left the Ontario County Jail building with his court clerk, Kristen M. Bartolotta, and Assistant Public Defender Cali Anne Valenti. While in the nearby parking lot, Respondent told Ms. Bartolotta and Ms. Valenti a story about his father in which, on at least three occasions, Respondent referred to a Black man as “Nigger Harry.”

7. By reason of the foregoing, Respondent should be disciplined for cause, pursuant to Article VI, Section 22, subdivision (a), of the Constitution and Section 44, subdivision 1, of the Judiciary Law, in that Respondent failed to uphold the integrity and independence of the judiciary by failing to maintain high standards of conduct so that the integrity and independence of the judiciary would be preserved, in violation of Section 100.1 of the Rules; failed to avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety, in that he failed to respect and comply with the law and failed to act in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary, in violation of Section 100.2(A)

of the Rules; and failed to so conduct his extra-judicial activities as to minimize the risk of conflict with judicial obligations, in that he failed to conduct his extra-judicial activities so that they do not cast reasonable doubt on his capacity to act impartially as a judge and detract from the dignity of the judicial office, in violation of Sections 100.4(A)(1) and (2) of the Rules.

### **CHARGE II**

8. On or about May 15, 2024, Respondent made unseemly, undignified, and racially insensitive comments about the defendant after presiding over the arraignment of *People v S* [REDACTED] *D* [REDACTED].

#### **Specifications to Charge II**

9. On or about May 15, 2024, Respondent performed the arraignment of *People v S* [REDACTED] *D* [REDACTED] in the Ontario County Centralized Arraignment Part at the Ontario County Jail building. Ms. D [REDACTED], a Black woman, was charged with one count of attempted assault in the second degree, a Class E felony, in violation of New York State Penal Law Sections 110.00/120.05(2).

10. Ms. D [REDACTED] was in custody and appeared in court with visible injuries to her face. When Respondent denied her attorney's request for release, Ms. D [REDACTED] became upset and said, among other things:

- A. "He beat the carp (*sic*) out of me, and my eyelid shut (unintelligible) right now, and I'm going to go back to the hospital [REDACTED], and I'm stuck in the, in the jail for

what? He the one who jumped on me. Like I said, ‘This is a racist county.’ I’m, I’m the wrong color to be here”;

B. “It’s a racist-ass county”; and

C. “[H]e’s holding me because I’m African American.”

11. After the arraignment was completed and Ms. D [REDACTED] was removed from the courtroom, Respondent, while still on the bench, said on the record, “Naturally she played the race card.” Assistant Public Defender Patrick Conklin and Ms. Bartolotta were present. Respondent said of Ms. D [REDACTED] to Mr. Conklin, “She was pretty well restrained so she couldn’t attack you, but she probably would have if she hadn’t been handcuffed.” Respondent also asked, “Do they teach you to fight back at the Public Defender’s Office?”

12. By reason of the foregoing, Respondent should be disciplined for cause, pursuant to Article VI, Section 22, subdivision (a), of the Constitution and Section 44, subdivision 1, of the Judiciary Law, in that Respondent failed to uphold the integrity and independence of the judiciary by failing to maintain high standards of conduct so that the integrity and independence of the judiciary would be preserved, in violation of Section 100.1 of the Rules; failed to avoid impropriety and the appearance of impropriety, in that he failed to respect and comply with the law and failed to act in a manner that promotes public confidence in the integrity and impartiality of the judiciary, in violation of Section 100.2(A) of the Rules; and failed to perform the duties of judicial office impartially and

diligently, in that he failed to perform his judicial duties without bias or prejudice against or in favor of any person and without manifesting by words or conduct bias or prejudice based upon race, in violation of Section 100.3(B)(4) of the Rules.

**WHEREFORE**, by reason of the foregoing, the Commission should take whatever further action it deems appropriate in accordance with its powers under the Constitution and the Judiciary Law of the State of New York.

Dated: April 3, 2025  
Albany, New York



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**ROBERT H. TEMBECKJIAN**  
Administrator and Counsel  
State Commission on Judicial Conduct  
61 Broadway, Suite 1200  
New York, New York 10006  
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STATE OF NEW YORK  
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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In the Matter of the Proceeding  
Pursuant to Section 44, subdivision 4,  
of the Judiciary Law in Relation to

**VERIFICATION**

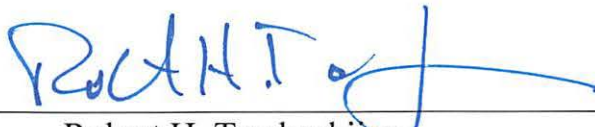
**WALTER W. JONES,**

a Justice of the Canandaigua Town Court,  
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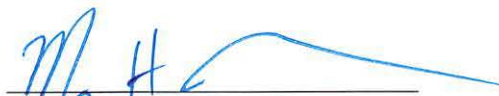
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STATE OF NEW YORK        )  
  : ss.:  
COUNTY OF ALBANY        )

ROBERT H. TEMBECKJIAN, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

1. I am the Administrator of the State Commission on Judicial Conduct.
2. I have read the foregoing Formal Written Complaint and, upon information and belief, all matters stated therein are true.
3. The basis for said information and belief is the files and records of the State Commission on Judicial Conduct.

  
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Robert H. Tembeckjian

Sworn to before me this  
3<sup>rd</sup> day of April 2025

  
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Notary Public

Marisa Harrison Santos  
Notary Public, State of New York  
No. 01SA0003835  
Qualified in Albany County  
Commission Expires March 27, 2027