

STATE OF NEW YORK
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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

K. FELICIA PITTS-DAVIS,

a Judge of the Syracuse City Court,
Onondaga County.

**NOTICE OF FORMAL
WRITTEN COMPLAINT**

NOTICE is hereby given to Respondent, K. Felicia Pitts-Davis, a Judge of the Syracuse City Court, Onondaga 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 her to serve the Commission at its Rochester office, 400 Andrews Street, Suite 700, Rochester, New York 14604, with her verified Answer to the specific paragraphs of the Complaint.

Dated: July 17, 2025
New York, 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: Robert F. Julian, Esq.
Attorney for Respondent
2037 Genesee Street
Utica, New York 13501-5951

STATE OF NEW YORK
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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

K. FELICIA PITTS-DAVIS,

**FORMAL
WRITTEN COMPLAINT**

a Judge of the Syracuse City Court,
Onondaga County.

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 K. Felicia Pitts-Davis (“Respondent”), a Judge of the Syracuse City Court, Onondaga County.
3. The factual allegations set forth in Charge I 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 1994. She has been a Judge of the Syracuse City Court, Onondaga County, since 2021. Respondent’s term expires on December 31, 2030.

CHARGE I

5. Respondent created at least the appearance of impropriety and bias against same-sex couples, in that: (A) on or about November 15, 2024, upon learning that she was scheduled to perform marriage ceremonies the following day for a same-sex couple and an opposite-sex couple, Respondent directed a court clerk to reschedule the same-sex couple's ceremony, and (B) when the two couples appeared in court the following day, Respondent officiated the opposite-sex couple's marriage ceremony, then left the bench and did not solemnize the same-sex couple's marriage.

Specifications to Charge I

6. It is a practice of the Syracuse City Court to assign one of the judges of the court on a rotating basis to preside over arraignments or other official proceedings on Saturdays. It is also a practice of the court to schedule the solemnization of marriages in the courtroom on Saturdays. Any couple may request being added to the court's calendar for that purpose, and the judge who is assigned to Saturday arraignment duty officiates the scheduled marriages as well.

7. On or about November 15, 2024, Respondent exchanged text messages with Lucille Matrassi, an assistant court clerk, about the docket for the following day, Saturday, November 16, 2025, when Respondent was scheduled to preside. The entirety of the text message exchange is appended as Exhibit 1.

8. Upon learning she was scheduled to preside over a recognizance hearing and two marriages the following morning, Respondent asked Ms. Matrassi if either marriage involved a “same sex” couple. When Ms. Matrassi replied that one of them might, Respondent said, “based upon my religious beliefs, I would be prohibited from doing same-sex marriages.” Respondent added that:

- A. She did not want any same-sex marriages scheduled until she could “get an opinion from the ethics committee;”
- B. She “would like for this conversation to stay between us until I have an official opinion;” and
- C. She “would like to have any such weddings reschedule[d] so that individuals can be accommodated by a different judge.”

9. When Ms. Matrassi asked Respondent to confirm it was the “same sex marriage” that should be rescheduled, Respondent said “Yes, please. And if there’s any confusion, then they can just reschedule both to next Saturday.”

10. Ms. Matrassi communicated Respondent’s rescheduling directive to the court clerk that schedules marriages, then advised Respondent that the same-sex couple’s marriage was rescheduled to December 7, 2024. Respondent replied, “Ok thx.”

11. Later that day, a court clerk discussed the matter further with Supervising City Court Judge Mary Anne Doherty, who said she would come to court the following morning to perform the same-sex marriage ceremony as originally scheduled.

12. On or about Saturday November 16, 2024, Respondent officiated a marriage ceremony for a heterosexual couple in open court. The same-sex couple, who were scheduled to be married afterward, were present in the courtroom for the heterosexual couple's ceremony. Afterward, the calendar clerk informed Respondent that Judge Doherty was on her way to the courtroom, and Respondent left the bench.

13. Respondent and Judge Doherty passed one another in the courtroom vestibule while Respondent was leaving the courtroom and Judge Doherty was entering. Judge Doherty asked Respondent why she would not perform the same-sex marriage ceremony, and Respondent cited her "religious beliefs."

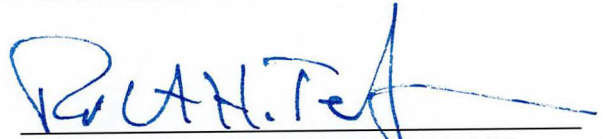
14. Judge Doherty entered the courtroom and solemnized the same-sex couple's marriage.

15. 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 she 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 she exhibited bias or prejudice against persons based upon sexual orientation, 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: July 17, 2025
New York, 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

STATE OF NEW YORK
COMMISSION ON JUDICIAL CONDUCT

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

VERIFICATION

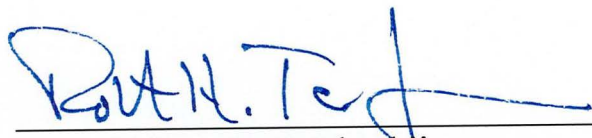
K. FELICIA PITTS-DAVIS,

a Judge of the Syracuse City Court,
Onondaga County.

STATE OF NEW YORK)
 : ss.:
COUNTY OF NEW YORK)

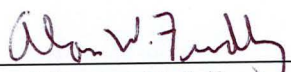
ROBERT H. TEMBECKJIAN, being duly sworn, deposes and says:

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.



Robert H. Tembeckjian

Sworn to before me this
17th day of July 2025



Notary Public

ALAN W. FRIEDBERG
Notary Public, State of New York
Registration No. 02FR4511070
Qualified in New York County
Commission Expires 08-09-2025

12:44

5G 54

EXHIBIT 1



Felicia >

Hi Judge. I just wanted to let you know that I am working with you tomorrow. We have a Recog Hearing at 9:00 and two weddings at 9:15. See you tomorrow 😊

1:34 PM

Thanks so much. Are any of the weddings same sex?

1:35 PM

Let me check

1:35 PM

By the looks of the names one of them may be. We are not 100% sure.

1:38 PM

OK because based upon my religious beliefs, I would be prohibited from doing same-sex marriages. And would not want any of them to be scheduled until I can get an opinion from the ethics committee. I

1:43 PM



iMessage



12:44

5G 54



Felicia >

If possible, I would like for this conversation to stay between us until I have an official opinion, but would like to have any such weddings reschedule so that individuals can be accommodated by a different judge

1:45 PM

Ok. No problem. I won't say a word. Just to be clear, you'd like me to have the clerk that schedules the weddings, to reschedule the one that we think is a same sex marriage tomorrow, right?

1:48 PM

Yes, please. And if there's any confusion, then they can just reschedule both to next Saturday

1:48 PM

Ok. Got it

1:49 PM



iMessage



12:45

5G 54



Felicia >

Ok. Got it

1:49 PM

Thanks a bunch

1:52 PM

You're welcome

1:53 PM

There was one same sex couple. The clerk called them and left a message that it was rescheduled to December 7.

2:11 PM

Ok thx

2:13 PM

You're welcome

2:13 PM