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Complaint Filed Against Marin County Superior Court Family Law Judge Bev Wood & Court CEO Kim Turner for Evidence Tampering

SAN RAFAEL – California Family Law Attorney Barbara Kauffman submitted a detailed complaint last week to California law enforcement and judicial oversight officials alleging that Marin County Superior Court Family Law Judge Beverly Wood and Marin County Court Executive Officer Kim Turner participated in backdating official court records. The complaint requests a criminal investigation of Wood and Turner and, if appropriate, indictment for evidence tampering and obstruction of justice. [Read the Official June 9, 2014 Complaint to Law Enforcement here.](#)

The complaint indicates that Wood was previously reported to the California Commission on Judicial Performance in connection with record-tampering concerns, and that Turner previously engaged in the mass destruction of child custody evidence contained in Marin Family Court Services mediation working files during a legislative audit of the Marin Family Court.

Turner's 2009 destruction of child custody mediation working files, which were frequently subpoenaed when parents wanted to challenge a mediator's recommendation to the court about child custody, took place while she was serving as a member of the Judicial Council of California. The evidence destruction sparked a local public protest and a call for criminal investigation. However, the Marin Court stated that the destruction took place with the knowledge and approval of the California Administrative Office of the Courts (the staff agency of the Judicial Council), and both the AOC and the Marin Court argued that the destroyed documents were not "official court records." [Read the 2010 local Marin news article about this here.](#)

Ironically, Turner was the recipient of the California Judicial Council's 2013 "William C. Vickrey Leadership in Judicial Administration Award." According to the Judicial Council, this award honors individuals in judicial administration for "significant contributions to and leadership in their profession." In making the award to Turner, the Judicial Council noted that she "has been a very active member of a working group improving trial court records management."

Kauffman made headlines in January 2013 when she initiated Quo Warranto lawsuit proceedings against longtime Shasta County Family Law retired Presiding Judge Jack Halpin, who had been repeatedly "temporarily" assigned to serve on the Shasta County bench for 18 years, which Kauffman alleged violated the public's constitutional right to elect their local judges. California Chief Justice Tani Cantil-Sakauye removed Halpin from the Shasta County bench within two weeks. [Read the 2013 Record Searchlight news article about this here.](#)

The 6/9/14 complaint alleges that the court records that were backdated by Turner and Wood include the official Marin Superior Court register of actions and a minute order pursuant to which

Wood herself undertook to strike a judicial disqualification request lodged against her. The disqualification request was based on claims that in a child custody case pending before her, Wood repeatedly gave special treatment to, and engaged in secret communications and hearings with, a former client of her husband's law firm, Freitas, McCarthy, MacMahon & Keating. Wood's financial disclosure forms have indicated that Wood has a substantial financial interest in that firm, and that she worked there prior to serving on the Marin bench. Wood and Turner reportedly have refused requests to issue and serve an official Notice of Entry of Order stating the actual date on which the minute order striking the disqualification request was entered. The complaint demands the removal of Wood and Turner from the Marin Courts.

Kauffman's concerns about conflicts of interest between the Freitas McCarthy firm, Wood and other members of the Marin County bench date back to 2005. [Read about these conflict of interest concerns here.](#)

This year alone, at least two judges, Ohio Judge Tracie Hunter and Ohio Judge Harry Jacob III, have been indicted on evidence tampering charges, among others. Texas Judge Denise Pratt resigned to avoid criminal prosecution. Two of these three cases directly related to backdated orders.

- **Ohio Judge Tracie Hunter:** [Court Blasts Indicted Judge Tracie Hunter](#)
- **Texas Judge Denise Pratt:** [Embattled Judge Pratt Resigns, Suspends Campaign](#)
- **Ohio Judge Harry Jacob III:** [Bedford Judge Harry Jacob III indicted again by a Cuyahoga County Grand Jury](#)

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[Lieber seeking audit of family court system](#) - Capitol Weekly (June 26, 2008)

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