

Written by Kathy  
Wednesday, 19 October 2022 03:06

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By Kathy Wray Coleman, associate publisher, editor-in chief.....Investigative article below-CLE  
VELAND, Ohio

— The Ohio Supreme Court on Tuesday decided 5-2 to indefinitely suspend the law license of Cleveland Municipal Court Judge Pinkey Carr, a serious action undertaken by the state's majority White and largely Republican high court that operates to immediately remove the Black judge from the largely Black 13-member municipal court bench.

On the bench since 2012 before Tuesday's suspension, Carr can apply to the court for reinstatement of her law license in two years. Her attorney had requested progressive discipline that would have permitted Carr to stay on the bench and told the court that her client began having issues only in the past two years and that she accepted responsibility for her behavior.

Similarly situated White and male judges, said sources, were not treated so harshly by the office of disciplinary counsel for the court, which recommended a two year suspension rather than an indefinite suspension. Other sources, mainly Black leaders, are saying that for the court to exceed what the office of disciplinary counsel requested and to suspend Carr indefinitely is extraordinary, and both "racist and sexist."

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Sources say that the decision was issued this month and on Tuesday allegedly because Carr, a former assistant Cuyahoga County prosecutor who was the lead prosecutor relative to the 2011 murder, rape and other convictions of late serial killer Anthony Sowell, is a Black Democrat. The intent of releasing its decision weeks before the midterm elections is questionable, say sources, and could have been designed to embarrass the Democrats, and to get at the outspoken Carr, who has said privately and purportedly to other judges that some White Cleveland judges have done what she is accused of doing.

Currently the seven-member high court in Ohio consists of four Republicans and three Democrats

Ohio's election is Nov 8 for a controversial U.S. Senate seat, congressional and state legislative seats, statewide offices, open judicial seats, and some ballot issues and local and other offices.

Three seats are up for grabs on Ohio's highest court, namely that of Chief Justice Maureen O'Connor, who is age-limited, and Justices Patrick Fischer and Patrick DeWine, a son of Gov Mike DeWine. Per state law, the older DeWine, as governor, will name Carr's replacement, likely a Republican who will serve until an election is held, unless such replacement runs and is elected. The DeWine's, one a justice and the other a governor, and Justice Fischer are seeking reelection, and Justice Sharon Kennedy, a Republican like O'Connor, Fischer, and the DeWine's, is battling it out for O'Connor's chief justice seat with Justice Jennifer Brunner, a Democrat on the court and a former Ohio secretary of state.

Neither Brunner nor Kennedy is up for reelection so the one that loses the race for chief justice,

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an elected position, will remain on Ohio's top court after the election, The other two seats on the state's high court are held by Democratic Justices Melody Stewart, a former 8th District Court of Appeals judge out of Cuyahoga County and the court's first Black elected justice, and Michael Donnelly, a former Cuyahoga County common pleas judge

Like Kennedy and Brunner, Stewart and Donnelly are not up for reelection this year. They both recused themselves from hearing Carr's disciplinary case because Carr, though a since removed municipal court judge, is also a Democrat out of Cuyahoga County.

Carr is accused of violating the ethical and other provisions of the Judicial Code of Conduct and the Ohio Lawyer's Professional Code of Responsibility. In its 5-2 decision to strip Carr of her judgeship and law license, Republican Justices O'Connor and Fischer, and Justice Brunner, though a Democrat, voted to suspend her indefinitely as did the two stand-in judges for Democrats Donnelly and Stewart. Justices DeWine and Kennedy, both Republicans, dissented with Kennedy writing in her dissent that it was unfair to suspend Carr indefinitely based on the data before the court, and particularly since the office of disciplinary counsel for the court only recommended a two year suspension of her law license.

It is the second time the state's high court has suspended a Cleveland judge from the bench since the removal in 2014 of former judge Angela Stokes, a daughter of the late 11th congressional district congressman Louis Stokes and a niece of former Cleveland mayor Carl B Stokes, a late Black mayor and a former Cleveland municipal court judge himself. But Angela Stokes, who is older than Carr, was allowed to continue practicing law, and to draw upon her retirement.

Carr is accused in several complaints before the bar in the past two years of issuing illegal

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capias warrants, carrying on court when Cleveland Administrative and Presiding Judge Michelle Earley had closed court due to the pandemic, and of mistreating and being rude to defendants and attorneys who came before her. Still, say her supporters, and on condition of anonymity, "she did what White and other judges traditionally do and her biggest problem was being strong, Black and female, and angering White men and women in power." Others say Carr's style was harsh at times and that she was abrasive and sometimes had a prosecutorial demeanor, and that O'Connor, the court's first female chief justice, is fed up with out-of-control judges.

The job of judge, whether a municipal or common pleas judge of Cuyahoga County, is no easy task as judges must juggle crowded case dockets, limited resources, unruly defendants who will literally curse you out, and anxious and sometimes arrogant criminal defense attorneys. Some of the judges are corrupt and unfair, data show, two of them formerly on the general division common pleas bench imprisoned via an ongoing county corruption probe.

Carr had drawn the ire of Cleveland's mainstream media, which is routine when complaints are leveled against Black judges by prominent White men, this time those of prominence who lodged complaints against her including then Chief Cuyahoga County Public Defender Mark Stanton, who has since retired, and well-known criminal defense attorney Ian Friedman, the former president of the Cleveland Metropolitan Bar Association.

White male judges brought up on disciplinary charges like Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge Daniel Gaul, a judge who regularly hands Blacks excessive sentences, loses on appeal for murder convictions of Blacks in his courtroom. and who is currently before the court for alleged impropriety, often get off without discipline, data show. A since removed Bedford Municipal Court judge, Harry Jacob, allegedly pimped women in his court and falsified court dockets, and even after criminal conviction he still has his law license, compliments of the Ohio Supreme Court. Moreover, an investigation by [Clevelandurbannews.com](https://www.clevelandurbannews.com) and [Kathywraycolemanonlineblog.com](https://www.kathywraycolemanonlineblog.com)

also reveals that Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Judge John O'Donnell has stolen homes for JPMorgan Chase bank from Blacks in illegal foreclosure cases before him coupled with using his power and influence to allegedly have Blacks who complained maliciously prosecuted and stalked by police at their homes and otherwise.

A Democrat and three time loser as to three bids for a Supreme Court seat O'Donnell, however, like Gaul, remains free of any discipline from the state's highest court. And there are so many more White male judges who do as they please in Ohio without consequences, and to the detriment of so many innocent and poor Black people, and others

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Municipal court judges in Ohio handle cases bound over to the common pleas court for possible felony indictments and cases involving traffic, non-traffic misdemeanors, evictions and small civil claims (in which the amount in controversy does not exceed \$3,000 for small claims and \$15,000 for municipal court).

Cleveland is a largely Black major American city of some 383,000 people and a Democratic stronghold. It is the largest city in Cuyahoga County, a 29 percent Black county, and also a Democratic stronghold.

By Kathy Wray Coleman, associate publisher, editor-in-chief (Coleman is a former biology teacher and a seasoned Black journalist, and an investigative, legal, scientific, and political reporter who trained for 17 years at the Call and Post Newspaper in Cleveland, Ohio).

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Telephone: (216) 659-0473. Email: [editor@clevelandurbannews.com](mailto:editor@clevelandurbannews.com).

We interviewed former president Barack Obama one-on-one when he was campaigning for president. As to the Obama interview,

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