

Public Admonition of Judge Matthew A. Sheehan Vigo Superior Court 5

September 14, 2026

The Indiana Commission on Judicial Qualifications has determined that formal disciplinary charges are warranted against the Honorable Matthew A. Sheehan of Vigo Superior Court 5. However, in lieu of filing formal disciplinary proceedings, the Commission issues this Admonition pursuant to Supreme Court Admission and Discipline Rule 25 VIII E(7). Judge Sheehan cooperated fully with the Commission in this matter, acknowledges that he violated the Code of Judicial Conduct, and apologizes for unreasonable delay in issuing a ruling on a matter.

The Commission admonishes Judge Sheehan for unreasonable delay in issuing a final ruling when he served as Special Judge in a dissolution matter in Sullivan Circuit Court. Judge Sheehan assumed jurisdiction over the dissolution matter on July 20, 2022, and he held a final hearing on the dissolution petition on April 21, 2023. Thereafter, over the course of nearly two years, despite holding several status conferences and, in September 2024, indicating that a ruling would be issued within one week, Judge Sheehan delayed issuing a final ruling. During that period, the parties attempted to prompt the issuance of a ruling by filing multiple requests for either a status conference or a ruling, and citing harm caused by the delay in issuing a ruling.

On March 12, 2025, the husband filed a Motion for Change of Venue from Judge due to the failure to issue a decree of dissolution. On March 13, 2025, Judge Sheehan denied the Motion for Change of Venue from Judge and ordered that a second evidentiary hearing would be held on March 28, 2025. On May 2, 2025, the husband filed a Verified Motion for Final Order, again citing harm caused by the delay in ruling. Judge Sheehan did not rule on the motion or issue a final ruling. On May 15, 2025, the husband filed a Praecipe for Delay Under Trial Rule 53.2(A), which rule allows parties whose matters have not been ruled on within 90 days to seek to have the case withdrawn from the judge and transferred to a new judge by the Indiana Supreme Court. On July 1, 2025, the Supreme Court removed Judge Sheehan from the matter and later assigned a new judge. Before the new judge could issue a final decision, the wife, who was disabled and had extremely limited access to marital funds, passed away.

Judge Sheehan acknowledges that he violated Rule 1.2 of the Code of Judicial Conduct, which requires judges to act at all times in a manner that promotes the public's confidence in the integrity of the judiciary and to avoid the appearance of impropriety. Judge Sheehan also acknowledges that he violated Rule 2.5(A) of the Code of Judicial Conduct, which requires judges to perform judicial and administrative duties competently, diligently, and promptly. Judge Sheehan expresses remorse for his actions and offers, by way of mitigation, that extenuating circumstances contributed to the delay, such as the incapacity of a party's attorney and the wife at various times, and that he felt that additional information was required from the parties to issue a ruling. The Commission reminds judges that delays in the administration of justice can have a significant detrimental impact on the parties and other affected individuals, and it is incumbent on judges to issue rulings with reasonable swiftness and/or to take promptly any action necessary to bring a matter to a swift resolution. Delays can have real world consequences, as seen in this matter.

This Admonition concludes the Commission's investigation, and Judge Sheehan will not be formally charged with ethical misconduct.

*Questions concerning this Admonition may be directed to Adrienne L. Meiring,
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