

J.WADE PADGETT-GEORGIA COURT OF APPEALS

Key findings include:

- **Appointed to a vacancy created by ethics removal:** Padgett was appointed by Gov. Brian Kemp in 2024 to fill the Court of Appeals vacancy created by the removal of Judge Christian Coomer following ethics violations.
- **Career judiciary insider:** Former violent crimes prosecutor; served as Chief Magistrate, then Superior Court judge before elevation to the appellate bench. Deeply embedded in the Augusta/Columbia legal establishment.
- **“Tough judge” branding:** Publicly describes himself as a tough, no-nonsense judge; has previously stated, “If you deserve to go to jail, you will go to jail.” Messaging aligns with traditional law-and-order positioning, not ideological extremism.
- **2023 dismissal scrutiny:** Local investigative reporting highlighted hundreds of criminal case dismissals or administrative clearances under his signature. Padgett characterized actions as backlog cleanup. This remains the most tangible performance-based vulnerability.
- **No documented ethics violations:** No bar discipline, judicial sanctions, criminal charges, or confirmed misconduct in private practice or on the bench.
- **Guardian ad Litem controversy – indirect only:** Served in the circuit during the Doug Nelson GAL scandal, but no official source connects Padgett to misconduct or continued appointments. Allegations stem from advocacy blogs, not formal findings.
- **Named in 2024 federal §1983 suit:** Listed as a defendant in *Langston v. Paine* (prisoner civil rights case). No merits determination and no finding of wrongdoing; common litigation risk for sitting judges.
- **Political contributions – localized GOP network:** Padgett and his wife contributed to local Republican legislators and judicial candidates (2006–2012). No record of contributions to Kemp or national ideological PACs.

The Georgia Court of Appeals is the intermediate appellate court for Georgia and hears most appeals that are not reserved to the Supreme Court of Georgia. The court has 15 judges who sit in five divisions of three judges each (with assignments made/changed pursuant to internal rules and statute) [[Georgia AOC](#), accessed, 2/18/2026].

Georgia’s intermediate appellate judges are chosen through statewide, nonpartisan elections at the general primary in even-numbered years, with terms structured on a six-year cycle under state law [[Justia](#), accessed, 2/18/2026]. For the 2026 cycle, the Georgia Secretary of State has published a list of “Judges – Court of Appeals” offices appearing on the ballot in 2026 that includes “ J. Wade Padgett” with a term end date shown as 12/31/2026 [[Georgia Secretary of State](#), accessed, 2/19/2026].

Demographically and politically, Georgia is a large and fast-growing state whose population is estimated by the U.S. Census Bureau at ~11.3M (July 1, 2025) and ~11.18M (July 1, 2024), with substantial metropolitan concentration and continued growth that has reshaped electoral and civic institutions [[United States Census](#), accessed, 2/19/2026]. The court’s statewide jurisdiction means judges campaign (and are evaluated by voters) in a context that includes: (a) a competitive statewide political environment; (b) intense scrutiny around election rules and election litigation; and (c) high salience of criminal justice, protest-related prosecutions, and separation-of-powers disputes [[Georgia Court of Appeals](#), 12/19/2024].

BACKGROUND

Brian Kemp Announced Padgett’s Appointment On February 19, 2024. “Governor Brian P. Kemp today announced the appointment of two judges and two solicitors general across the state. The governor

has appointed J. Wade Padgett to the Court of Appeals vacancy created by the removal of Court of Appeals Judge Christian Coomer on August 16, 2023. Judge Padgett's appointment to the Court of Appeals creates a vacancy in the Columbia Judicial Circuit that will be filled by the appointment of J. Grady Blanchard. Governor Kemp has also appointed Spencer Tyson as the Solicitor General of Effingham County and Amy Godfrey as the Solicitor General of Coweta County." [[Governor Brian Kemp](#), Press Release, 2/19/2024]

- **The Appointment Filled Of Court Of Appeals Vacancy Created By The Removal Of Judge Christian Coomer.** "Governor Brian P. Kemp today announced the appointment of two judges and two solicitors general across the state. The governor has appointed J. Wade Padgett to the Court of Appeals vacancy created by the removal of Court of Appeals Judge Christian Coomer on August 16, 2023. Judge Padgett's appointment to the Court of Appeals creates a vacancy in the Columbia Judicial Circuit that will be filled by the appointment of J. Grady Blanchard. Governor Kemp has also appointed Spencer Tyson as the Solicitor General of Effingham County and Amy Godfrey as the Solicitor General of Coweta County." [[Governor Brian Kemp](#), Press Release, 2/19/2024]
- **Georgia Governor Brian Kemp Said He Had "The Honor Of Swearing In Judge J. Wade Padgett To The Court Of Appeals Of Georgia.**



Governor Brian Kemp ✓
April 3, 2024 · 🌐

Today I had the honor of swearing in Judge J. Wade Padgett to the Court of Appeals of Georgia. He has been a great leader in the Columbia and Augusta Judicial Circuits, and I look forward to his continued service defending the laws of our state and nation.



[Facebook, Governor Brian Kemp, 4/3/2024]

The State Bar Of Georgia's Speaker Biography States Padgett Was Sworn Into The Court Of Appeals Role On April 3, 2024 And Described Him As The 96th Judge Of The Court Of Appeals. "Judge J. Wade Padgett is a dedicated public servant, educator, and longtime member of the judiciary. He was appointed by Governor Brian Kemp as the 96th judge of the Court of Appeals. He was sworn in to that position on April 3, 2024." [[State Bar of Georgia](#), accessed, 2/25/2026]

Padgett Was Born In Atlanta And Spent Most Of His Career In Augusta. "Judge Padgett was born in Atlanta but has spent the majority of his professional career in the Augusta area" [[State Bar of Georgia](#), accessed, 2/25/2026]

1987: Padgett Received His Bachelors Degree In History From The University Of Georgia. "Padgett was born in Atlanta but has spent the majority of his professional career in the Augusta area.

He obtained a BA in history from the University of Georgia in 1987. He earned his law degree from Georgia State University in 1990. While in law school, he received several awards and was extremely involved with the Student Trial Advocacy program led by Attorney Tom Jones. Judge Padgett became a member of the Georgia Bar in 1990.” [[State Bar of Georgia](#), accessed, 2/25/2026]

1990: Padgett Received His Law Degree From Georgia State University. “Padgett was born in Atlanta but has spent the majority of his professional career in the Augusta area. He obtained a BA in history from the University of Georgia in 1987. He earned his law degree from Georgia State University in 1990. While in law school, he received several awards and was extremely involved with the Student Trial Advocacy program led by Attorney Tom Jones. Judge Padgett became a member of the Georgia Bar in 1990.” [[State Bar of Georgia](#), accessed, 2/25/2026]

1990: Padgett Was Admitted To The Georgia Bar. “Padgett was born in Atlanta but has spent the majority of his professional career in the Augusta area. He obtained a BA in history from the University of Georgia in 1987. He earned his law degree from Georgia State University in 1990. While in law school, he received several awards and was extremely involved with the Student Trial Advocacy program led by Attorney Tom Jones. Judge Padgett became a member of the Georgia Bar in 1990.” [[State Bar of Georgia](#), accessed, 2/25/2026]

1995: Padgett Was An Appointed Associate Magistrate Judge In Columbia County, GA. “In 1995, Judge Padgett was appointed as an Associate Magistrate Judge for Columbia County. He was elected Chief Magistrate of Columbia County in 2005. Because his duties as a Magistrate Judge were part-time, he also practiced law while serving in Magistrate Court. During his time as a member of the Council of Magistrate Judges, he chaired the Uniform Rules Committee. Judge Padgett served as Chief Magistrate of Columbia County until he was appointed to the Superior Court bench.” [[State Bar of Georgia](#), accessed, 2/25/2026]

2005: Padgett Was Elected Chief Magistrate. “In 1995, Judge Padgett was appointed as an Associate Magistrate Judge for Columbia County. He was elected Chief Magistrate of Columbia County in 2005. Because his duties as a Magistrate Judge were part-time, he also practiced law while serving in Magistrate Court. During his time as a member of the Council of Magistrate Judges, he chaired the Uniform Rules Committee. Judge Padgett served as Chief Magistrate of Columbia County until he was appointed to the Superior Court bench.” [[State Bar of Georgia](#), accessed, 2/25/2026]

2009: Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue Appointed Padgett To The Superior Court Bench In The Augusta Judicial Circuit. “On February 3, 2009, Judge Padgett was appointed to the Superior Court bench by Governor Sonny Perdue. He served as a Superior Court judge for the Augusta Judicial Circuit and was one of three judges appointed to the Columbia Judicial Circuit when that circuit was formed in 2021. While on the Superior Court bench, Judge Padgett reformed and led the New Judge Orientation program for all new Superior Court judges in Georgia, beginning in 2014. He was elected to serve as an officer of the Council of Superior Court Judges, ultimately serving as President of the Council in 2021-2022. In 2024, Judge Padgett was the recipient of the Emory Findley award, an award honoring service to the Council of Superior Court judges.” [[State Bar of Georgia](#), accessed, 2/25/2026]

2021: Padgett Joined A New Slate Of Judges Of The Newly Created Columbia Judicial Circuit. “On February 3, 2009, Judge Padgett was appointed to the Superior Court bench by Governor Sonny Perdue. He served as a Superior Court judge for the Augusta Judicial Circuit and was one of three judges appointed to the Columbia Judicial Circuit when that circuit was formed in 2021. While on the Superior Court bench, Judge Padgett reformed and led the New Judge Orientation program for all new

Superior Court judges in Georgia, beginning in 2014. He was elected to serve as an officer of the Council of Superior Court Judges, ultimately serving as President of the Council in 2021-2022. In 2024, Judge Padgett was the recipient of the Emory Findley award, an award honoring service to the Council of Superior Court judges.” [[State Bar of Georgia](#), accessed, 2/25/2026]

Padgett Served As An Assistant District Attorney For The Augusta Judicial Circuit. “Following law school, Judge Padgett served as an Assistant District Attorney for the Augusta Judicial Circuit where he served as a violent crimes prosecutor and led the office’s team dealing with crimes against children. He began his private practice of law as an associate with O. Franklin Askin, Jr. P.C. and eventually formed his own law firm. While in private practice, Judge Padgett represented individual and corporate clients in a variety of areas including corporate operations, personal injury, criminal defense, domestic relations, probate and other areas of the law. Judge Padgett represented clients in both Georgia state and federal courts.” [[State Bar of Georgia](#), accessed, 2/25/2026]

Padgett Served As President Of The Council Of Superior Court Judges. “While on the Superior Court bench, Judge Padgett reformed and led the New Judge Orientation program for all new Superior Court judges in Georgia, beginning in 2014. He was elected to serve as an officer of the Council of Superior Court Judges, ultimately serving as President of the Council in 2021-2022. In 2024, Judge Padgett was the recipient of the Emory Findley award, an award honoring service to the Council of Superior Court judges.” [[State Bar of Georgia](#), accessed, 2/25/2026]

Padgett Was A Host To A Podcast Called “The Good Judge-Ment Podcast,” Where He Would Discuss “Georgia Laws.” “The best evidence of his passion for teaching, however, may be found in the podcast series that he created and continues to co-host. Judge Padgett and Judge Tain Kell (ret.) co-host a podcast known as *The Good Judge-Ment Podcast* where they discuss topics on Georgia law. They began the podcast in 2018 and it is popular with both lawyers and judges as a unique medium for legal education.” [[State Bar of Georgia](#), accessed, 2/25/2026]

2017: Padgett Published A Book Named “From Court In The Woods To Court In The Metropolis, A History Of The Augusta Judicial Circuit.” “Judge Padgett is also a published author. His book, *From Court in the Woods to Court in the Metropolis, A History of the Augusta Judicial Circuit*, was published in 2017. His work as an author earned accolades. He was nominated as Georgia Author of the Year (History category) by the Georgia Writer’s Association and the Historical Records Advisory Council presented him the 2017 Award for Excellence for Local History. Judge Padgett’s wife, Alice W. Padgett, serves as Probate Judge for Columbia County. They have two children, Matthew and Jordan. They also have grandchildren whom they adore. Judge Padgett resides in Evans, Georgia.” [[State Bar of Georgia](#), accessed, 2/25/2026]

Padgett’s Wife Alice W. Padgett Served As A Probate Judge For Columbia County. “Judge Padgett is also a published author. His book, *From Court in the Woods to Court in the Metropolis, A History of the Augusta Judicial Circuit*, was published in 2017. His work as an author earned accolades. He was nominated as Georgia Author of the Year (History category) by the Georgia Writer’s Association and the Historical Records Advisory Council presented him the 2017 Award for Excellence for Local History. Judge Padgett’s wife, Alice W. Padgett, serves as Probate Judge for Columbia County. They have two children, Matthew and Jordan. They also have grandchildren whom they adore. Judge Padgett resides in Evans, Georgia.” [[State Bar of Georgia](#), accessed, 2/25/2026]

- **State Bar of Georgia: “They Have Two Children, Matthew And Jordan.”** “Judge Padgett is also a published author. His book, *From Court in the Woods to Court in the Metropolis, A History of the Augusta Judicial Circuit*, was published in 2017. His work as an author earned

accolades. He was nominated as Georgia Author of the Year (History category) by the Georgia Writer’s Association and the Historical Records Advisory Council presented him the 2017 Award for Excellence for Local History. Judge Padgett’s wife, Alice W. Padgett, serves as Probate Judge for Columbia County. They have two children, Matthew and Jordan. They also have grandchildren whom they adore. Judge Padgett resides in Evans, Georgia.” [State Bar of Georgia, accessed, 2/25/2026]

State Bar Of Georgia: “Judge Padgett Resided In Evans, Georgia.” “Judge Padgett resides in Evans, Georgia.” [State Bar of Georgia, accessed, 2/25/2026]

Padgett Said That He Earned A Reputation For Being Tough But Fair.” “Over the next 15 years, Judge Padgett presided over thousands of cases and earned a reputation for being tough but fair, well-prepared, and committed to applying the law consistently.” [J.Wade Padgett, accessed, 2/26/2026].

Political Contributions & Activity

Contributions made by J. Wade Padgett’s Wife

2006: Alice Padgett Contributed \$100 And \$150 To William V. Stephens’ Campaign For Georgia Secretary Of State.

C2006000172 Stephens For Secretary Of State, Inc. William V. Stephens	Alice Padgett 1355 Montrose Pl Evans, GA 30809-5252	Attorney J. Wade Padgett, P.C.	05/26/2006 Monetary Primary 2006	\$100.00	\$0.00	
C2006000172 Stephens For Secretary Of State, Inc. William V. Stephens	Alice Padgett 1355 Montrose Pl Evans, GA 30809-5252	Attorney J. Wade Padgett, P.C.	06/02/2006 Monetary Primary 2006	\$100.00	\$0.00	
C2006000172 Stephens For Secretary Of State, Inc. William V. Stephens	Alice Padgett 1355 Montrose Pl Evans, GA 30809-5252	Attorney J. Wade Padgett, P.C.	06/02/2006 Monetary Primary 2006	\$150.00	\$0.00	

[Georgia Government Transparency And Campaign Finance Commission, accessed, 2/27/2026]

2007: Alice Padgett Made A Campaign Contribution To Republican Congressional Candidate Jim Whitehead; The Employer Listed On The Contribution Record Was “J.Wade Padgett, Attorneys.

Contributor name	Recipient	State	Employer	Receipt date	Amount
PADGETT, ALICE MRS.	WHITEHEAD FOR CONGRESS	GA	J. WADE PADGETT ATTNYS	05/19/2007	\$1,000.00

[FEC, accessed, 2/25/2026]

In A 2007 Press Release, Whitehead Framed His Campaign Around “Stopping Illegal Immigration, Stopping Wasteful Spending, And Providing Real Tax Relief.” ““ I am running to continue the legacy of conservative leadership offered by my good friend Charlie Norwood. The issues of the day stopping illegal immigration, stopping wasteful spending to provide some real tax relief to Georgians, and supporting quality educational opportunities are vital to our children and grandchildren's futures. With the support of the voters, I will continue to provide the same bold, conservative leadership offered by Charlie Norwood for so many years.” [Just Facts, 2/16/2007]

2008: Alice Padgett Contributed To \$250 To Ben L. Harbin

C2006000327 Comm. To Elect Ben Harbin Ben L. Harbin	Alice Padgett 136 Pond View Rd Evans, GA 30809- 6682	Homemaker Information Requested	07/04/2008 Monetary Primary 2008	\$250.00	\$0.00	
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[Georgia Government Transparency And Campaign Finance Commission, accessed, 2/27/2026]

2011: Alice Padgett Contributed \$200 To Ben L. Harbin.

C2006000327 Comm. To Elect Ben Harbin Ben L. Harbin	Alice Padgett 136 Pond View Rd Evans, GA 30809- 6682	Homemaker None	11/28/2011 Monetary Primary 2012	\$200.00	\$0.00	
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[Georgia Government Transparency And Campaign Finance Commission, accessed, 2/27/2026]

Harbin Was A Long-serving Republican Member Of The Georgia House Representing The Augusta Area.

2011: Alice Padgett Contributed \$200 To Barry Fleming.

C2006000117 People for Barry Fleming Barry A. Fleming	Alice Padgett 136 Pond View Road Evans, GA 30809	Judge Columbia County Probate Court	11/01/2011 Monetary Primary 2012	\$200.00	\$0.00	
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[Georgia Government Transparency And Campaign Finance Commission, accessed, 2/27/2026]

2012: Alice Padgett Contributed \$250 To Barry Fleming.

C2006000117 People for Barry Fleming Barry A. Fleming	Alice Padgett 136 Pond View Road Evans, GA 30809	Judge Columbia County Probate Court	06/07/2012 Monetary Primary 2012	\$250.00	\$0.00	
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[Georgia Government Transparency And Campaign Finance Commission, accessed, 2/27/2026]

2008: Alice Padgett Contributed \$250 To Lee Anderson A Republican State Legislature.

C2007000926 Anderson for House Lee I Anderson	Alice Padgett 136 Pond View Rd. Evans, GA 30809	Attorney Self	04/30/2008 Monetary Primary 2008	\$250.00	\$0.00	
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[Georgia Government Transparency And Campaign Finance Commission, accessed, 2/27/2026]

2008: Alice Padgett Contributed \$250 To William S. Jackson During His Campaign For The Georgia State Senate.

C2007000891 Jackson for Senate William S Jackson	ALICE W. PADGETT 136 POND VIEW ROAD EVANS, GA 30809	ATTORNEY SELF	06/19/2008 Monetary Primary 2008	\$250.00	\$0.00	
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[Georgia Government Transparency And Campaign Finance Commission, accessed, 2/27/2026]

2012: Alice Padgett Contributed \$500 To James C. Overstreet, A Probate Judge Candidate In Columbia County.

C2006000832 James C. Overstreet James C Overstreet	Alice W. Padgett 136 Pond View Road Evans, GA 30809	Judge, Probate Court Columbia County, Georgia	06/01/2012 Monetary Primary 2012	\$500.00	\$0.00	
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[Georgia Government Transparency And Campaign Finance Commission, accessed, 2/27/2026]

2012: Alice Padgett Contributed \$150 To Jason Ray Troiano’s Campaign For Magistrate Judge In Columbia County.

C2012000098 Committee to Elect Jason Troiano, Magistrate Judge Jason Ray Troiano	Alice Padgett 136 Pond View Road Evans, GA 30809	Judge Columbia County	02/24/2012 Monetary Primary 2012	\$150.00	\$0.00	
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[Georgia Government Transparency And Campaign Finance Commission, accessed, 2/27/2026]

Contributions by J. Wade Padgett

2012: J. Wade Padgett Contributed \$500 To Judge John Flythe.

C2011003554 Committee to Elect Judge John Flythe Edward John Flythe	J. Wade Padgett 130 Pond View Road Evans, GA 30809	Judge State of Georgia	03/06/2012 Monetary General 2012	\$500.00	\$0.00	
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[Georgia Government Transparency And Campaign Finance Commission, accessed, 2/27/2026]

2012: J. Wade Padgett Contributed \$500 To Jason Troiano’s Campaign.

C2012000098 Committee to Elect Jason Troiano, Magistrate Judge Jason Ray Troiano	J. Wade Padgett 136 Pond View Road Evans, GA 30809	Judge State of Georgia	02/28/2012 Monetary Primary 2012	\$500.00	\$0.00	
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[Georgia Government Transparency And Campaign Finance Commission, accessed, 2/27/2026]

2012: J.Wade Padgett Contributed \$500 To Charles E. Evans, A Solicitor Associated With Prosecutorial Functions In Augusta Judicial Circuit.

C2011004299 Campaign to Elect Solicitor Chuck Evans Charles E. Evans	J. Wade Padgett 136 Pond View Rd. Evans, GA 30809	Judge Augusta Circuit	02/23/2012 Monetary Primary 2012	\$500.00	\$0.00	
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[Georgia Government Transparency And Campaign Finance Commission, accessed, 2/27/2026]

2012: J.Wade Padgett Contributed \$350 To Rebecca Ashley Wright, A Judicial Candidate In Georgia.

C2008000510 Committee to Elect Ashley Wright Rebecca Ashley Wright	J. Wade and Alice W. Padgett 136 Pond View Rd. Evans, GA 30809	Judges State of Ga	10/04/2012 Monetary General 2012	\$250.00	\$0.00	
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[Georgia Government Transparency And Campaign Finance Commission, accessed, 2/27/2026]

Contributions Made By J. Wade Padgett's Son

2019: Matthew W. Padgett Contributed \$350 To The Committee For Judge Trent Brown.

C2019000132 Committee For Judge Trent Brown, Inc. Enis Trenton Brown III	Matthew W. Padgett 7013 Evans Town Center Boulevard Evans, GA 30809	Attorney Self	10/23/2019 Monetary Primary 2020	\$350.00	\$0.00	
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[Georgia Government Transparency And Campaign Finance Commission, accessed, 2/27/2026]

ON THE ISSUES

NO FINDINGS OF NOTE FOR FIRST ROUND VET

VULNERABILITIES & ADVERSE FINDINGS OF NOTE

Vacancy Background: Removal of Judge Christian Coomer

The Seat Padgett Took On The Court Of Appeals Was Vacated By Judge Christian Coomer For Ethics Violations. “The Georgia Supreme Court decided Wednesday that a state appeals judge accused of ethical misconduct should be removed from the bench, though it said the case was “initially a close one.” Christian Coomer, appointed by former Gov. Nathan Deal in 2018, was accused of flouting ethics rules on how a lawyer should treat a client and of looting his campaign account to pay for a family vacation to Hawaii and loans to keep his struggling law firm afloat. A three-member panel of the state Judicial Qualifications Commission recommended in January that the state Supreme Court remove him from the bench. It reaffirmed that decision after further review. The panel’s findings for show Coomer “exploited a vulnerable person, has repeatedly violated campaign finance rules and flouted professional norms, and has done so knowingly and for his own personal financial benefit,” the justices said in a unanimous decision.” [AP News, 8/16/2023]

- **2018: Coomer Was Appointed By Former Governor Nathan Deal.** “The Georgia Supreme Court decided Wednesday that a state appeals judge accused of ethical misconduct should be removed from the bench, though it said the case was “initially a close one.” Christian Coomer, appointed by former Gov. Nathan Deal in 2018, was accused of flouting ethics rules on how a lawyer should treat a client and of looting his campaign account to pay for a family vacation to Hawaii and loans to keep his struggling law firm afloat. A three-member panel of the state Judicial Qualifications Commission recommended in January that the state Supreme Court remove him from the bench. It reaffirmed that decision after further review. The panel’s findings for show Coomer “exploited a vulnerable person, has repeatedly violated campaign finance rules and flouted professional norms, and has done so knowingly and for his own personal financial benefit,” the justices said in a unanimous decision.” [AP News, 8/16/2023]

- **Coomer Used His Campaign Account To Pay For Family Vacations In Hawaii.** “The Georgia Supreme Court decided Wednesday that a state appeals judge accused of ethical misconduct should be removed from the bench, though it said the case was “initially a close one.” Christian Coomer, appointed by former Gov. Nathan Deal in 2018, was accused of flouting ethics rules on how a lawyer should treat a client and of looting his campaign account to pay for a family vacation to Hawaii and loans to keep his struggling law firm afloat. A three-member panel of the state Judicial Qualifications Commission recommended in January that the state Supreme Court remove him from the bench. It reaffirmed that decision after further review. The panel’s findings for show Coomer “exploited a vulnerable person, has repeatedly violated campaign finance rules and flouted professional norms, and has done so knowingly and for his own personal financial benefit,” the justices said in a unanimous decision.” [[AP News](#), 8/16/2023]
- **The Georgia Supreme Court Said Coomer “Exploited A Vulnerable Person, Has Repeatedly Violated Campaign Finance Rules And Flouted Professional Norms, And Has Done So Knowingly And For His Own Personal Financial Benefit.”**“The Georgia Supreme Court decided Wednesday that a state appeals judge accused of ethical misconduct should be removed from the bench, though it said the case was “initially a close one.” Christian Coomer, appointed by former Gov. Nathan Deal in 2018, was accused of flouting ethics rules on how a lawyer should treat a client and of looting his campaign account to pay for a family vacation to Hawaii and loans to keep his struggling law firm afloat. A three-member panel of the state Judicial Qualifications Commission recommended in January that the state Supreme Court remove him from the bench. It reaffirmed that decision after further review. The panel’s findings for show Coomer “exploited a vulnerable person, has repeatedly violated campaign finance rules and flouted professional norms, and has done so knowingly and for his own personal financial benefit,” the justices said in a unanimous decision.” [[AP News](#), 8/16/2023]

2015 Contempt Citation Involving Attorney Discipline

ABA Journal 2015: The ABA Journal Reported That While Padgett Was A Trial Judge, He Held Attorney Christopher Nicholson In Contempt Of Court And Ordered A Psychological Evaluation. “A suspended Georgia lawyer won a delay of a contempt hearing last week by voluntarily agreeing to a psychiatric evaluation. But Christopher Nicholson was involuntarily committed the next day by the same judge, when he tried to leave the Georgia Regents Medical Center Hospital before the exam was complete. Hospital staff called Richmond County Superior Judge Daniel J. Craig as attorney Christopher Nicholson was about to exit, and Craig issued the commitment order. It says Nicholson’s attending psychiatrist thought the commitment would be reasonable, the Augusta Chronicle reports. Another Augusta Chronicle article provides additional details. The newspaper says involuntary commitments in the state normally do not exceed 72 hours, but Craig’s order requires Nicholson to be held until an evaluation is completed and Craig OKs his release. Craig was scheduled last week to hear a Dec. 11 contempt citation against Nicholson by Judge J. Wade Padgett, who accused the attorney of disrespectful and abusive behavior in court.” [[ABA Journal](#), 1/15/2015]

Civil Litigation Naming Padgett (2024)

2024: Padgett Was A Named Defendant In A Federal Civil Rights Lawsuit “Langston V. Paine.

- Lawsuits: Padgett is named as a defendant in at least one federal civil-rights lawsuit (*Langston v. Paine*, filed 2024) involving inmate treatment. As is common, plaintiffs often name judges; no sanctions or findings are reported there.

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