

SAINT REGIS MOHAWK TRIBAL COURT

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF)

CHRISTOPHER P. THOMPSON)

Deceased.)

)

)

Case No.: 18-CIV-00011

JUDICIAL DISCLOSURE OF PRIOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The present case was initiated by the filing of a probate petition by Connie Thompson on March 27, 2018. The present action requires the Court to appoint an Administrator/Executor, assess the Estate of Christopher Thompson, review any Creditor's claims brought forth, and distribute the real and personal property to the heirs/beneficiaries. The present action may result in the involvement of the decedent's mother, Connie Thompson, in the matter.

In order to preserve and maintain the integrity of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Court, the Court discloses to any and all heirs/beneficiaries and interested parties the following:

1. Connie Thompson is a member of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe Healing to Wellness Drug Court team and, therefore, works with Chief Judge Carrie Garrow; and
2. The decedent, Christopher Thompson, was a named Respondent in a land dispute and Chief Judge Carrie Garrow conflicted off of the case and the case was transferred to Associate Judge Barbara Potter¹; and
3. Connie Thompson and Chief Judge Carrie Garrow are not familial related; and
4. Chief Judge Carrie Garrow is not familial related to the decedent.

The Court notes the following relevant provisions of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Code of Judicial Conduct. The Code requires judicial officers to avoid even the appearance of impropriety.² The "appearance of impropriety" is defined as conduct or status that would lead a reasonable person to think that the actor is behaving or will be inclined to behave inappropriately

¹ The Court notes Chief Judge Carrie Garrow conflicted on the record at the initial status conference on March 14, 2017. For reference to the conflict, *see Solomon v. Thompson, et. al.*, 17-LND-00012, 1 (April 24, 2017).

² SRMT Code of Judicial Conduct § 4.

or wrongfully.³ In instances, where a judge's impartiality might be reasonably questioned, including but not limited to instances where the judge has a personal bias or prejudice concerning a party, the judge is required to disqualify him or herself from the case.⁴

In regards to the present matter, Chief Judge Carrie Garrow is the presiding judicial officer as the Chief Judge of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Court. After carefully considering the present facts and the Code, the Court hereby allows any and all heir/beneficiary and/or interested parties the option to object to Chief Judge Garrow as the presiding judge in the Matter of the Estate of Christopher Thompson.

In order to object to Chief Judge Carrie Garrow presiding over the matter, an heir/beneficiary or interested party may file with the Court a written statement providing the reasoning as to why they object by April 30, 2018 or appear in person for the status conference in the matter on May 4, 2018 at 12 PM. The Court will assess each objection raised by applying the relevant provisions of the Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe's Code of Judicial Conduct and the facts presented at the status conference in order to make a determination as to whether the instant case must be transferred to an Associate Judge.

Signed by my hand this 29th day of March, 2018.



Carrie E. Garrow, Chief Judge
Saint Regis Mohawk Tribal Court

³ Black's Law Dictionary. (10th ed. 2014), available at Westlaw BLACKS.

⁴ SRMT Code of Judicial Conduct § 5. D. 1.