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Guest Editorial

Clay Tiffany, TV Reporter, Reveals Pataki's Ethical Problems

By Clay Tiffany

On September 14, 1999, responding to a May 21, 1999 complaint filed by this reporter regarding allegations of judicial misconduct by New York State Judge William Wetzel, the New York State Commission On Judicial Conduct wrote: "Upon careful consideration, the Commission concluded that there was insufficient indication of judicial misconduct to warrant an investigation." This refusal to even investigate was done despite this reporter having made the Commission aware of serious allegations of illegal gambling by Judge William Wetzel and the substantial accusation that, while a sitting Village of Briarcliff Manor Justice, William Wetzel held a fundraiser at his Central Drive residence for then-gubernatorial candidate George Pataki in 1994.

Subsequent to Wetzel's fundraiser, where money was given to the Pataki campaign, according to an attendee, Wetzel was appointed by Governor Pataki to a New York State Court of Claims judgeship, despite Wetzel's minimal judicial experience. Is this not another example of

Governor Pataki's ethical problems? Was it ethical for sitting Village Justice William Wetzel to have held an alleged fundraiser for a political candidate at his home? What about the apparent quid pro quo aspects?

Why did the Commission, on June 16, 1999, write this reporter that: "All Commission members vote on complaints unless there is a manifest conflict. There is no conflict in this matter. Accordingly, Commission members appointed by the Governor will participate." Do you believe Pataki appointees should not have recused themselves? According to an attendee, among the fundraiser attendees were George Pacchiana, whose Thalle construction company does big business with the state government, Hank D'Amato, a reputed Ossining gambler and Larry Montague, an alleged illegal gambling operator. Ossining sources have told this reporter that Judge William Wetzel has long associated with Hank D'Amato, Larry Montague and other Ossining gamblers and that Judge Wetzel has participated in illegal gambling with them.

All of the above has been reported on this reporter's television show, *Dirge For The Charlatans*. Stay tuned for more revelations.

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