

Michigan Affirmative Action Failure: Judge Leo Bowman

Judge Leo Bowman is a Michigan affirmative action failure, which will hinder African American advances in the judiciary system. In 2006 Michigan citizens voted with a 58% approval for a Michigan Constitutional amendment that would prohibit affirmative action in selecting individuals for positions in public institutions. Governor Granholm actively campaigned against the then proposed constitutional amendment banning affirmative action. To spite the voters Governor Granholm appointed Leo Bowman to a vacancy on the Oakland County Circuit Court bench, which she was legally entitled to do, to show her support for affirmative action in public institutions. Unfortunately, Michigan's Constitution does not require the Michigan Senate or any other government agency to approve gubernatorial judicial appointments. I, others, and the administration of justice suffered because of the defiant and bad political decision made in 2007 by then Governor Granholm to urgently make Leo Bowman the first African American male judge on the Oakland County Circuit Court bench. I admire Judge Bowman for rising from a disadvantaged Pontiac, Michigan, youth to become a Pontiac traffic court judge. In my opinion he was a very poor choice to be appointed to the Oakland County Circuit Court as a Family Law Court Judge. Was Leo Bowman the most qualified and the best candidate for the position? Has Leo Bowman been an excellent Judge? Has the public and individuals benefited from Leo Bowman being on the bench? Has Leo Bowman advanced the administration of justice in Oakland County? Has Leo Bowman enhanced the case for affirmative action? My answer to all of these questions is **NO**.

My extensive experience with Judge Leo Bowman in Family Court indicated to me that he is a very mediocre judge. The first time I appeared before him he stated that he did not read my motion, and I would have to re-file it and come back. He did not know or follow the law concerning child support. He did not enter the correct figures into the child support formula. He denied me standard child support credits for Social Security payments by ignoring and angrily refusing to look at standing orders previously entered by Judge Mary Ellen Brennan that my ex-wife and I signed granting the credits. It cost me an additional \$1,500 in legal fees to have Judge Mary Ellen Brennan reissue the correct order. He told me in court that he found I did not work during my parenting time in order to reduce my child support payment. I felt that Leo Bowman showed an arrogant bias against me. His written opinion against me was four months late, shallow, contained simple math errors, and was biased. I was probably his last case in Family Law Court because his written opinion was issued four months after he left the Family Law Court. His opinion and orders indicated he never competently mastered family law.

An informal survey concerning Judge Bowman revealed that others feel his opinions are lacking. He is arrogant and does not allow subjects before him to input information. Others stated he is not very bright. Certainly, his abuse of potential jurors by ordering them to spend time in jail for contempt of court was unprecedented. After he was admonished the first time, he angrily abused another potential juror in the same manner, and was admonished a second time for the same thing. The man has anger management problems. I saw his rage when he ignored and angrily refused to look at an order issued by Judge Mary Ellen Brennan.

I expected and hoped that Judge Bowman, the first male African American to be a judge on the Oakland County Circuit Court, would be an exemplary judge so that other African Americans could easily follow. I was surprised to learn in 2007 that Judge Bowman was the Jackie Robinson of the Oakland County Circuit Court. Unfortunately, Governor Granholm and Judge Bowman did not follow the Jackie Robinson playbook. Jackie Robinson was an outstanding athlete and Major League Baseball Player. Governor Granholm appointed Leo Bowman, a man of undistinguished legal caliber, who is now a below average player sitting on the Oakland County Sixth Circuit Court Bench, and should be replaced. People like Judge Leo Bowman who are affirmative action failures can unfortunately cause some to question the abilities and caliber of other minority individuals.

Many politicians when questioned about affirmative action quickly state they are against quotas and move on. In the late 1920s my father, a brilliant man, was denied admission the first time he applied to the University of Michigan Medical School because a quota system was in place to limit the number of Jews in the medical school.

I voted in 2006 for the Michigan Constitutional amendment banning affirmative action. I feel that at a certain level the best qualified should be selected for positions in public colleges and government jobs. I want an individual who serves me at any position to be there through proper qualifications, and not a back door entry to fulfill quotas. I consider myself a liberal on social issues. Discrimination based on race, ethnicity, country of origin, gender, sexual orientation, and age should be illegal. I took this position when I ran for the Michigan Senate in 2010 as a Democrat. I took the same position when I ran for the Michigan House in 2012. I have and will express such on my web site www.tagolden.com. I feel that everyone should have an equal opportunity to be successful. I am for giving the less fortunate extra help in order for them to develop to their full potential and compete to be successful. Americans come from many diverse backgrounds. It would be nice that through fair competition these various groups are adequately represented in what is considered the upper strata of society.

In April, 2014, after a lengthy legal process the United States Supreme Court affirmed by a 6 to 2 vote that The Michigan Constitutional Amendment of 2006 that bans affirmative action is legal and proper. A positive outcome of this ruling is that students from minority groups graduating from the University of Michigan should not be viewed with suspicion that they are not up to the standards that the University of Michigan represents.

In my opinion Leo Bowman as the first male African American Judge on the Oakland County Circuit Court is a disgrace and should be replaced. He has unfortunately made it more difficult for African Americans to be elected judge on that Court by setting such a poor example. Individuals and the public suffer when an individual such as Judge Leo Bowman is forced on them due to an appointment for the sake of affirmative action. Bowman is a serious side effect of affirmative action. On the street Leo has hindered the case for affirmative action.

Footnote:

Judge Leo Bowman quietly retired on April 30, 2021, without an announcement in the news media. It is my opinion that the bad judge retired due to his actions in court which are detailed in an [article published in the Detroit Free Press dated April 2, 2020](#). It is my opinion that he was told to retire by the Michigan Judicial Tenure Commission. The Michigan Judicial Tenure Commission is very secretive, and will never release any information concerning Judge Bowman if that was the case. We should rejoice that Leo Bowman is no longer a judge of the Oakland County Circuit Court.

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