

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. 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 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 was unprecedented. After he was admonished the first time, he abused another potential juror in the same manner, and was admonished a second time for the same thing.

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

Granholt and Judge Bowman did not follow the Jackie Robinson playbook. Governor Granholt 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.

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. He was fortunate that his state representative helped him get admitted when he applied the following year.

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 feel that affirmative action as it was practiced at the University of Michigan prior to 2006 is wrong, and it should be banned. 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 have and will express such on my web site www.tagolden.com. I will take the same position when I run for the Michigan House in 2012. 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.

The Michigan Constitutional Amendment of 2006 that bans affirmative action was ruled unconstitutional under the U.S. Constitution in a ruling issued July 1, 2011, by a three-judge panel of the U.S. 6th Circuit Court of Appeals by a two to one margin. The majority wrote the Michigan Amendment of 2006 violates the equal protection clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The legal issues are complex and beyond the scope of this paper. Most likely the case will eventually be decided by the U.S. Supreme Court in a couple of years. In the meantime the ban remains in effect.

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.

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