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Senate removes federal judge in impeachment conviction

By the CNN Wire Staff
December 8, 2010 12:46 p.m. EST



Judge G. Thomas Porteous is "forever disqualified to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust or profit under the United States."

(CNN) -- The U.S. Senate found Federal Judge G. Thomas Porteous of Louisiana guilty on four articles of impeachment on Wednesday, which will remove him from the federal bench.

He had been accused of accepting kick-backs and lying to the Senate and FBI.

The vote makes Porteous, 63, only the eighth federal judge in the nation's history to be impeached and convicted.

Porteous is also "forever disqualified to hold and enjoy any office of honor, trust or profit under the United States," Sen. Daniel Inouye said during Wednesday's Senate hearing.





EXHIBIT "7"





The Senate adopted the motion barring Porteous from holding a future federal office by a vote of 94 to 2.

In March, the House of Representatives voted unanimously to impeach Porteous on corruption charges.

"Our investigation found that Judge Porteous participated in a pattern of corrupt conduct for years," U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff, D-California, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee Task Force on Judicial Impeachment.

In a statement at the time, Porteous' lawyer, Richard W. Westling, said the Justice Department had decided not to prosecute because it did not have credible evidence.

"Unfortunately, the House has decided to disregard the Justice Department's decision and to move forward with impeachment," he said. "As a result, we will now turn to the Senate to seek a full and fair hearing of all of the evidence."

Porteous, who turns 64 this year, was appointed to the federal bench in 1994. He has not worked as a judge since he was suspended with pay in the fall of 2008, Westling said.

The most recent previous impeachment of a federal judge by the House was last year.

Judge Samuel B. Kent of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas resigned after being impeached on charges of sexual assault, obstructing and impeding an official proceeding and making false and misleading statements, according to the website of the Federal Judicial Center.

Before then, Judge Walter L. Nixon of U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi was impeached in 1989 on charges of perjury before a federal grand jury. The Senate convicted him and removed him from office that year.

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House votes to impeach federal judge from Louisiana

STORY HIGHLIGHTS

- Judge G. Thomas Porteous Jr. was impeached by U.S. House of Representatives
- Porteous is from U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana
- Rep. Adam Schiff: Porteous "participated in a pattern of corrupt conduct for years"

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Washington (CNN) -- The House of Representatives <u>voted unanimously</u> Thursday to impeach Judge G. Thomas Porteous Jr. of U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, making him the nation's 15th federal judge ever impeached.

"Our investigation found that Judge Porteous participated in a <u>pattern of corrupt conduct for years</u>," said U.S. Rep. Adam Schiff, D-California, chairman of the House <u>Judiciary</u> Committee Task Force on Judicial Impeachment.

"Litigants have the right to expect a judge hearing their case will be fair and impartial, and avoid even the appearance of impropriety. Regrettably, no one can have that expectation in Judge Porteous' courtroom."

After the impeachment vote, Schiff and Rep. Bob Goodlatte, R-Virginia, were named the lead impeachment managers for the Senate trial, which will decide whether to remove Porteous from the bench.

"Today's vote marks only the second time in over 20 years that this has occurred," Goodlatte said in a House news release. "However, when evidence emerges that an individual is abusing his judicial office for his own advantage, the integrity of the entire judicial system becomes compromised."

In a statement, Porteous' lawyer Richard W. Westling said the Justice Department had decided <u>not to prosecute</u> because it did not have credible evidence.

"Unfortunately, the House has <u>decided to disregard</u> the Justice Department's decision and to move forward with impeachment. As a result, we will now turn to the Senate to seek a full and fair hearing of all of the evidence."

In a telephone interview, Westling said he did not know when the Senate trial would be held. "There are no clear rules that dictate timing," he said

Last year, the Task Force on Judicial Impeachment held evidentiary hearings that led to unanimous approval of the four articles of impeachment, citing evidence that Porteous "intentionally made material false statements and representations under penalty of perjury, engaged in a corrupt kickback scheme, solicited and accepted unlawful gifts, and intentionally misled the Senate during his confirmation proceedings," the House release said.

Porteous was appointed to the federal bench in 1994.

In 2007, after an FBI and federal grand jury investigation, the Justice Department alleged "pervasive misconduct" by Porteous and evidence "that Judge Porteous may have violated federal and state criminal laws, controlling canons of judicial conduct, rules of professional responsibility, and conducted himself in a manner antithetical to the constitutional standard of good behavior required of a

The complaint said the department opted not to seek criminal charges for reasons that included issues of statute of limitations and <u>other factors</u>. But Westling said the statute of limitations <u>was not</u> applicable.

An Impeachment Task Force held four hearings late last year that focused on allegations of misconduct by Porteous, including:

- -- Involvement in a corrupt kickback scheme
- -- Failure to recuse himself from a case he was involved in
- -- Allegations that Porteous made false and misleading statements, including concealing debts and gambling losses
- -- Allegations that Porteous asked for and accepted "numerous things of value, including meals, trips, home and car repairs, for his personal use and benefit" while taking official actions on behalf of his benefactors
- -- Allegations that Porteous lied about his past to the U.S. Senate and to the FBI about his nomination to the federal bench "in order to conceal corrupt relationships," Schiff said in his floor statement as prepared for delivery

Porteous was invited to testify, but he declined to do so, Schiff said. "His long-standing pattern of corrupt activity, so utterly lacking in honesty and integrity, demonstrates his unfitness to serve as a United States District Court judge," he said.

Porteous, 63, has not worked as a judge since he was suspended with pay in the fall of 2008, Westling said.

The last federal judge impeachment occurred last year, when Judge Samuel B. Kent of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas resigned after being impeached on charges of sexual assault, obstructing and impeding an official proceeding, and making false and misleading statements, according to the Web site of the Federal Judicial Center.

The Senate, sitting as a court of impeachment, dismissed the articles.

Before then, Judge Walter L. Nixon of U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi was impeached in 1989 on charges of perjury before a federal grand jury. The Senate convicted him and removed him from office that year.

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Senate Begins Impeachment Trial of Federal Judge

Published September 13, 2010 | Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- A federal judge from Louisiana is corrupt and unfit to serve on the bench. House members said Monday as

ADVEDTICEMENT

they began a rare congressional impeachment trial by laying out their case against the jurist.

Playing the role of prosecutors, Reps. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., and Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., used their opening statements to a Senate impeachment panel to outline what they called a <u>decadeslong pattern of unethical behavior</u> by New Orleans-area U.S. District Judge G. Thomas Portegus

They said that included <u>taking cash</u>, expensive meals and gifts <u>from lawyers</u> and a bail bondsman, <u>lying to Congress</u> and <u>filing for bankruptcy under a false name</u>.

"It is the unanimous view of the House of Representatives that his conduct is not only wrong but so violative of the public trust that he <u>cannot be allowed</u> to remain on the bench <u>without</u> making a <u>mockery of the court system</u>," Schiff said.

Porteous' attorney, Jonathan Turley, denied some allegations but acknowledged others such as accepting meals, which he said is perfectly legal. He said the judge's behavior, while perhaps reflecting poor judgment, doesn't meet the high crimes and misdemeanors standard set in the Constitution for impeachment.

"Judge Porteous has never been indicted, let alone convicted, of any crime," Turley said. "What the Congress has impeached this judge for is <u>an appearance of impropriety</u>."

Turley also said much of the conduct in question occurred when Porteous was a state judge and that Congress would be breaking from precedent by convicting him for behavior that occurred before he joined the federal bench.

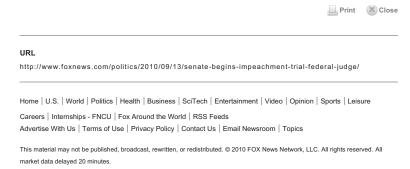
The Senate trial is the first since the 1999 case against former President Bill Clinton. <u>Porteous</u>, <u>who was appointed by Clinton in 1994</u>, would be just the eighth judge to be impeached and convicted by Congress.

The House voted <u>unanimously</u> in March to impeach Porteous. A two-thirds vote is needed in the Senate to convict him.

Senators hearing the case appear ready to resolve it quickly, scheduling a series of all-day hearings this week and next.

Porteous' behavior was uncovered in a <u>five-year FBI investigation</u> in Jefferson Parish dubbed "Operation Wrinkled Robe." Although the sting netted convictions against more than a dozen others, Porteous was never charged with a crime. He was, however, suspended from the bench.

Turley said Porteous, 63, plans to retire next year regardless of what happens.



http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2010/09/13/senate-begins-impeachment-trial-federal-jud... 9/15/2010

The Washington Post

Senate opens impeachment trial against judge

By BEN EVANS The Associated Press Monday, September 13, 2010; 5:16 PM

WASHINGTON -- A federal judge from Louisiana is corrupt and unfit to serve on the bench, House members said Monday as they began a rare congressional impeachment trial by laying out their case against the jurist.

Playing the role of prosecutors, Reps. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., and Bob Goodlatte, R-Va., used their opening statements to a Senate impeachment panel to outline what they called a decades-long pattern of unethical behavior by New Orleans-area U.S. District Judge G. Thomas Porteous. They said that included taking cash, expensive meals and other gifts from lawyers and a bail bondsman, lying to Congress and filing for bankruptcy under a false name.

"It is the unanimous view of the House of Representatives that his conduct is not only wrong but so violative of the public trust that he cannot be allowed to remain on the bench without making a mockery of the court system," Schiff said.

Porteous' attorney, Jonathan Turley, denied some allegations but acknowledged others such as accepting meals, which he said is perfectly legal. He said the judge's behavior, while perhaps reflecting poor judgment at times, doesn't meet the high crimes and misdemeanors standard set in the

Constitution for impeachment.

"Judge Porteous has never been indicted, let alone convicted, of any crime," Turley said. "What the Congress has impeached this judge for is an appearance of impropriety."

Turley also said much of the conduct in question occurred when Porteous was a state judge and that Congress would be breaking from precedent by convicting him for behavior that occurred before he joined the federal bench.

The Senate trial is the first since the 1999 case against former President Bill Clinton. Porteous, who was appointed by Clinton in 1994, would be just the eighth judge to be impeached and convicted by Congress, and the first in more than 20 years.

The House voted unanimously in March to

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The Washington Post

Senate opens impeachment trial against judge

bring charges. A two-thirds vote is needed in the Senate to convict him.

The Senate panel hearing the case, chaired by Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., appears ready to resolve it quickly, scheduling a series of all-day hearings this week and next.

House investigators who spent months investigating say Porteous was struggling with drinking and gambling and had racked up more than \$150,000 in credit card debt by 2000, mostly for cash advances spent in casinos.

Most of Monday's testimony involved a close relationship that Porteous maintained with t wo attorneys who once worked with the judge, Robert Creely and Jacob Amato.

As they did earlier before House investigators, the two acknowledged giving Porteous thousands of dollars in cash going back to the 1980s, including about \$2,000 stuffed in an envelope in 1999, just before Porteous decided a major civil case in their client's favor. They also acknowledged taking him on trips such as one to Las Vegas for a bachelor party for the judge's son, at which Creely said he helped pay for an expensive meal, a hotel room and dancing at a strip club.

Creely and Amato, however, said they never received favorable treatment from Porteous and that they gave him money only because he was a longtime friend who needed help.

Porteous' behavior was uncovered in a fiveyear FBI investigation in Jefferson Parish dubbed "Operation Wrinkled Robe." Although the sting netted convictions against more than a dozen others, Porteous was never charged with a crime. He was, however, suspended from the bench, and the Judicial Conference of the United States recommended that Congress consider impeachment.

Turley said Porteous, 63, plans to retire next year regardless of what happens.



http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2010/09/13/AR2010091300954_pf.html

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John Pickering, U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire.

Impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives on March 2, 1803, on charges of mental instability and intoxication on the bench; Convicted by the U.S. Senate and removed from office on March 12, 1804.

Samuel Chase, Associate Justice, Supreme Court of the United States.

Impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives on March 12, 1804, on charges of arbitrary and oppressive conduct of trials; Acquitted by the U.S. Senate on March 1, 1805.

James H. Peck, U.S. District Court for the District of Missouri.

Impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives on April 24, 1830, on charges of abuse of the contempt power; Acquitted by the U.S. Senate on January 31, 1831.

West H. Humphreys, U.S. District Court for the Middle, Eastern, and Western Districts of Tennessee.

Impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives, May 6, 1862, on charges of refusing to hold court and waging war against the U.S. government; Convicted by the U.S. Senate and removed from office, June 26, 1862.

Mark W. Delahay, U.S. District Court for the District of Kansas.

Impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives, February 28, 1873, on charges of intoxication on the bench; Resigned from office, December 12, 1873, before opening of trial in the U.S. Senate.

Charles Swayne, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Florida.

Impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives, December 13, 1904, on charges of abuse of contempt power and other misuses of office; Acquitted by the U.S. Senate February 27, 1905.

Robert W. Archbald, U.S. Commerce Court.

Impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives, July 11, 1912, on charges of improper business relationship with litigants; Convicted by the U.S. Senate and removed from office, January 13, 1913.

George W. English, U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Illinois.

Impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives, April 1, 1926, on charges of abuse of power; resigned office November 4, 1926; Senate Court of Impeachment adjourned to December 13, 1926, when, on request of the House manager, impeachment proceedings were dismissed.

Harold Louderback, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California. Impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives, February 24, 1933, on charges of favoritism in the appointment of bankruptcy receivers; Acquitted by the U.S. Senate on May

Halsted L. Ritter, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida.

Impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives, March 2, 1936, on charges of favoritism in the appointment of bankruptcy receivers and practicing law while sitting as a judge; Convicted by the U.S. Senate and removed from office, April 17, 1936.

24, 1933.

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Harry E. Claiborne, U.S. District Court for the District of Nevada.

Impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives, July 22, 1986, on charges of income tax evasion and of remaining on the bench following criminal conviction; Convicted by the U.S. Senate and removed from office, October 9, 1986.

Alcee L. Hastings, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida. Impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives, August 3, 1988, on charges of perjury and conspiring to solicit a bribe; Convicted by the U.S. Senate and removed from office, October 20, 1989.

Walter L. Nixon, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Mississippi.

Impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives, May 10, 1989, on charges of perjury before a federal grand jury; Convicted by the U.S. Senate and removed from office, November 3, 1989.

Samuel B. Kent, U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas.

Impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives, June 19, 2009, on charges of sexual assault, obstructing and impeding an official proceeding, and making false and misleading statements; Resigned from office, June 30, 2009. On July 20, 2009, the U.S. House of Representatives agreed to a resolution not to pursue further the articles of impeachment, and on July 22, 2009, the Senate, sitting as a court of impeachment, dismissed the articles.

G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana. Impeached by the U.S. House of Representatives, March 11, 2010, on charges of accepting bribes and making false statements under penalty of perjury.

Articles of Impeachment Against United States District Court Judge G. Thomas Porteous, Jr.

From Wikisource

Impeaching G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, for high crimes and misdemeanors.

United States House Committee on the Judiciary

Introduced by Representative John Convers, Jr. on January 21, 2010.

RESOLUTION

Resolved, That G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., a judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, is impeached for high crimes and misdemeanors, and that the following articles of impeachment be exhibited to the Senate:

Articles of impeachment exhibited by the House of Representatives of the United States of America in the name of itself and all of the people of the United States of America, against G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., a judge in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, in maintenance and support of its impeachment against him for high crimes and misdemeanors.

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Article I

G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., while a Federal judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, engaged in a pattern of conduct that is incompatible with the trust and confidence placed in him as a Federal judge, as follows:

Judge Porteous, while presiding as a United States district judge in Lifemark Hospitals of Louisiana, Inc. v. Liljeberg Enterprises, denied a motion to recuse himself from the case, despite the fact that he had a corrupt financial relationship with the law firm of Amato & Creely, P.C. which had entered the case to represent Liljeberg. In denying the motion to recuse, and in contravention of clear canons of judicial ethics, Judge Porteous failed to disclose that beginning in or about the late 1980s while he was a State court judge in the 24th Judicial District Court in the State of Louisiana, he engaged in a corrupt scheme with attorneys, Jacob Amato, Jr., and Robert Creely, whereby Judge Porteous appointed Amato's law partner as a `curator' in hundreds of cases and thereafter requested and accepted from Amato & Creely a portion of the curatorship fees which had been paid to the firm. During the period of this scheme, the fees received by Amato & Creely amounted to approximately \$40,000, and the amounts paid by Amato & Creely to Judge Porteous amounted to approximately \$20,000.

Judge Porteous also made intentionally misleading statements at the recusal hearing intended to minimize the extent of his personal relationship with the two attorneys. In so doing, and in failing to disclose to Lifemark and its counsel the true circumstances of his relationship with the Amato & Creely law firm, Judge Porteous deprived the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals of critical information for its review of a petition for a writ of mandamus, which sought to overrule Judge Porteous's denial of the recusal motion. His conduct deprived the parties and the public of the right to the honest services of his office.

Judge Porteous also engaged in corrupt conduct after the Lifemark v. Liljeberg bench trial, and while he had the case under advisement, in that he solicited and accepted things of value from both Amato and his law partner Creely, including a payment of thousands of dollars in cash. Thereafter, and without disclosing his corrupt relationship with the attorneys of Amato & Creely PLC or his receipt from them of cash and other things of value, Judge Porteous ruled in favor of their client, Liljeberg.

By virtue of this corrupt relationship and his conduct as a Federal judge, Judge Porteous brought his court into scandal and disrepute, prejudiced public respect for, and confidence in, the Federal judiciary, and demonstrated that he is unfit for the office of Federal judge.

Wherefore, Judge G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., is guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors and should be removed from office.

Article II

G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., engaged in a longstanding pattern of corrupt conduct that demonstrates his unfitness to serve as a United States District Court Judge. That conduct included the following: Beginning in or about the late 1980s while he was a State court judge in the 24th Judicial District Court in the State of Louisiana, and continuing while he was a Federal judge in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, Judge Porteous engaged in a corrupt relationship with bail bondsman Louis M. Marcotte, III, and his sister Lori Marcotte. As part of this corrupt relationship, Judge Porteous solicited and accepted numerous things of value, including meals, trips, home repairs, and car repairs, for his personal use and benefit, while at the same time taking official actions that benefitted the Marcottes. These official actions by Judge Porteous included, while on the State bench, setting, reducing, and splitting bonds as requested by the Marcottes, and improperly setting aside or expunging felony convictions for two Marcotte employees (in one case after Judge Porteous had been confirmed by the Senate but before being sworn in as a Federal judge). In addition, both while on the State bench and on the Federal bench, Judge Porteous used the power and prestige of his office to assist the Marcottes in forming relationships with State judicial officers and individuals important to the Marcottes' business. As Judge Porteous well knew and understood, Louis Marcotte also made false statements to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in an effort to assist Judge Porteous in being appointed to the Federal bench.

Accordingly, Judge G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., has engaged in conduct so utterly lacking in honesty and integrity that he is guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors, is unfit to hold the office of Federal judge, and should be removed from office.

Article III

Beginning in or about March 2001 and continuing through about July 2004, while a Federal judge in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., engaged in a pattern of conduct inconsistent with the trust and confidence placed in him as a Federal judge by knowingly and intentionally making material false statements and representations under penalty of perjury related to his personal bankruptcy filing and by repeatedly violating a court order in his bankruptcy case. Judge Porteous did so by--

- (1) using a false name and a post office box address to conceal his identity as the debtor in the case;
- (2) concealing assets;
- (3) concealing preferential payments to certain creditors;
- (4) concealing gambling losses and other gambling debts; and
- (5) incurring new debts while the case was pending, in violation of the bankruptcy court's order.

In doing so, Judge Porteous brought his court into scandal and disrepute, prejudiced public respect for and confidence in the Federal judiciary, and demonstrated that he is unfit for the office of Federal judge.

Wherefore, Judge G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., is guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors and should be removed from office.

Article IV

In 1994, in connection with his nomination to be a judge of the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Louisiana, G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., knowingly made material false statements about his past to both the United States Senate and to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in order to obtain the office of United States District Court Judge. These false statements included the following:

- (1) On his Supplemental SF-86, Judge Porteous was asked if there was anything in his personal life that could be used by someone to coerce or blackmail him, or if there was anything in his life that could cause an embarrassment to Judge Porteous or the President if publicly known. Judge Porteous answered 'no' to this question and signed the form under the warning that a false statement was punishable by law.
- (2) During his background check, Judge Porteous falsely told the Federal Bureau of Investigation on two separate occasions that he was not concealing any activity or conduct that could be used to influence, pressure, coerce, or compromise him in any way or that would impact negatively on his character, reputation, judgment, or discretion.
- (3) On the Senate Judiciary Committee's `Questionnaire for Judicial Nominees', Judge Porteous was asked whether any unfavorable information existed that could affect his nomination. Judge Porteous answered that, to the best of his knowledge, he did `not know of any unfavorable information that may affect [his] nomination'. Judge Porteous signed that questionnaire by swearing that `the

information provided in this statement is, to the best of my knowledge, true and accurate'.

However, in truth and in fact, as Judge Porteous then well knew, each of these answers was materially false because Judge Porteous had engaged in a corrupt relationship with the law firm Amato & Creely, whereby Judge Porteous appointed Creely as a `curator' in hundreds of cases and thereafter requested and accepted from Amato & Creely a portion of the curatorship fees which had been paid to the firm and also had engaged in a corrupt relationship with Louis and Lori Marcotte, whereby Judge Porteous solicited and accepted numerous things of value, including meals, trips, home repairs, and car repairs, for his personal use and benefit, while at the same time taking official actions that benefitted the Marcottes. As Judge Porteous well knew and understood, Louis Marcotte also made false statements to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in an effort to assist Judge Porteous in being appointed to the Federal bench. Judge Porteous's failure to disclose these corrupt relationships deprived the United States Senate and the public of information that would have had a material impact on his confirmation.

Wherefore, Judge G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., is guilty of high crimes and misdemeanors and should be removed from office.



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