

LOCAL NEWS | www.expressgaynews.com

Local right-wing lawyer seeks judge's impeachment

Anti-obscenity crusader Thompson was reprimanded for sending gay porn to court

By JUAN CARLOS RODRIGUEZ

Oct. 18, 2007

Nearly a month after being reprimanded for submitting pornographic images of gay men into the federal court record, anti-obscenity crusader Jack Thompson is asking Congress and the acting U.S. attorney general to impeach the judge presiding over his suit against the Florida Bar Association.

In a letter addressed to U.S. Sens. Patrick Leahy and Arlen Specter and acting U.S. Attorney General Peter Keisler, Thompson is demanding that Federal District Judge Adalberto Jordan be removed from the bench for refusing to prosecute local attorney Norm Kent. Thompson has accused Kent of illegally distributing obscene materials on his website, www.nationalgaynews.com. Kent, who is also the founder and former publisher of the Express, has denied Thompson's allegations.

Thompson included the images of men engaging in sex into the court record Sept. 19 in an electronically filed pleading as evidence against Kent. He said he pulled the sexual images from web links that were posted on the front page of Kent's website. Kent said that neither he nor his staff posted any of the images referred to by Thompson. Kent said they were linked to his website by outside sites. In fact, the home page of Kent's site appears to contain no pornographic images, but it is possible to reach adult porn images by clicking on an advertiser and then clicking on "related links" from the advertiser's site.

Jordan denied Thompson's plea and sealed the filing. He then ordered Thompson to show cause as to why he should not go before the court's disciplinary Ad Hoc Committee.

"What Judge Jordan has done in this instance — refusing to report a crime, hiding the evidence, thereof, and then threatening the person who brought him evidence of that crime — constitutes an 'impeachable offense,'" Thompson wrote in his letter, dated Oct. 16.

Thompson would not comment directly about the letter, stating only that it spoke for itself. But he defended his filing of the gay porn into the court docket.

"I did nothing wrong," Thompson told the Express. "Nobody was surprised. Nobody was ambushed."

Jordan saw it differently. In his Sept. 24 court order about Thompson's filing, he wrote, "The attached exhibit, which includes several graphic images of oral and genital sex

between adult males, was filed in the docket of the case, without prior permission from the court. and it was not filed under seal.”

Jordan continued, “Mr. Thompson filed these images in a place where they are available for viewing by members of the public, including children — not withstanding his knowledge of their offensive nature.”

In his court order, Jordan wrote that there was no need to place the images in the public record when a simple link to a website would have sufficed.

Thompson avoided going before the court’s disciplinary ad hoc committee by agreeing not to file similar materials. He told the Express that he would not violate Jordan’s court orders in the case, but he is not contrite about the incident.

“If I had it to do over again,” he said, “I would.”

His suit against the Florida Bar contends, among other things, that the association is selectively prosecuting him and acting in collusion with Jordan and Kent against him. The Florida Bar is seeking to have Thompson’s suit dismissed. The Bar, in turn, is suing Thompson for professional misconduct. The case is scheduled to go to trial Nov. 26. That suit could lead to Thompson’s disbarment.

Thompson has filed numerous pleas in the case challenging Jordan’s orders. Among the many motions, Thompson has called for Kent and Jordan himself to be named as a defendants. He’s also alleged that the Ad-Hoc committee is biased and stacked against him.

“He’s taken his suit against the bar and added so much extraneous stuff,” Kent said. “It’s absurd. He continues to disgrace the dignity of the U.S. District Court with moronic pleadings that deserve and warrant reprimanding and sanctions. Everything he does is proof as to why the Bar is disciplining him.”

Last week, Jordan struck down several of Thompson’s motions, a decision Kent called a “knock-out” blow to Thompson’s suit. The court denied adding Kent into the lawsuit. He also shot down motions to recuse Jordan and to disqualify his court from hearing the case.

Thompson is known for suing or filing criminal charges against his opponent. He famously filed a police report against Janet Reno alleging battery when he ran against her for Dade County State Attorney in 1988. Reno had touched Thompson on the shoulder while responding to a note asking her to identify her sexual orientation.

“I prefer virile men,” Reno told him. “That is why I’m not attracted to you.”

Thompson has led anti-obscenity suits against the video game industry and against the makers of the games Grand Theft Auto and Bully. He has claimed that the games have

contributed to teen murders.

He has also advocated for banning sales of what he perceives to be indecent material by music groups, including 2 Live Crew, NWA and Madonna. Thompson was instrumental in having the Howard Stern show pulled from Orlando airwaves in 2004.

He has also worked against gay rights initiatives, such as the Miami-Dade Human Rights Ordinance. And, most recently, he has been an outspoken opponent of same-sex marriage, participating in a recent panel discussion in Miami.

Kent said he found Thompson's interest in his website revealing.

"The fact that a straight lawyer from Coral Gables is spending his day looking for gay porn on nationalgaynews.com speaks more volumes than anything I say," Kent said.



Jack Thompson, an outspoken opponent of porn and gay marriage, sent a letter Oct. 16 to acting U.S. Attorney General Peter Keisler asking him to remove Judge Adalberto Jordan from the bench. (AP Photo/ Tuscaloosa News, Jason Getz)