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March 7, 2023

Anne M. Hunter  
Staff Counsel  
Commission on Judicial Performance  
455 Golden Gate Avenue, Suite 14400  
San Francisco, CA 94102-3660

RE: Judge Robert Draper

Dear Ms. Hunter:

I am writing you regarding Judge Robert Draper of the Los Angeles Superior Court.

I recently had a case before Judge Draper in the matter of Bedrossian v. Tunncliffe, Los Angeles Superior Court Case No. 20STCV03693. The case went to trial and after the trial but before the judgment was entered, the case settled.

I have been an attorney for nearly 30 years. Over that time, I have seen big changes in the court system. It seems that the way law was practiced at the outset of my career has changed—both because of the attorneys, but also because of the judges. Times do change, and I adapt to that, but I must say that the legal profession seemed better at the beginning of my career.

That leads to me to Judge Draper. Judge Draper conducts himself and his courtroom in a manner that I compare with the best that the our judiciary has to offer. He and his staff are orderly and polite. Parties and counsel are treated professionally, respectfully and in a dignified way. Cases are handled in a timely and efficient manner.

As indicated, our case proceeded to trial. Our case was a bench trial, so it is markedly different than a jury trial. At all times during the trial, Judge Draper intently participated both procedurally and substantively. Procedurally, he dutifully adjudicated matters throughout the trial. Substantively, Judge Draper carefully considered the evidence and testimony and at times had questions of his own for the witnesses. His questions evidenced a clear understanding of the facts demonstrated by the evidence. Indeed, at times I asked myself why I did not ask some of the questions he had.

When the case was over, I did not completely agree with his tentative decision, but I understood it and believed it was very well reasoned and firmly grounded in the facts and the law.

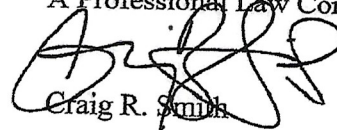
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As all of us attorneys talk, I would advise my colleagues that they will be treated fairly and thoughtfully in their cases before Judge Draper.

Please feel free to contact me to discuss this matter or if you have any questions.

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Craig R. Smith