



For Immediate Release

JUDGE BRANTLEY NEEDS TO STEP ASIDE

Despite 30 year History with Plaintiffs Attorney, Judge refuses to step aside in airport matter.

(Dallas, GA., June 11, 2015) On May 18, 2015, Paulding County Industrial Building Authority attorneys filed a motion for the recusal of the Honorable Judge G. Grant Brantley on hearing a lawsuit brought by six local residents to prevent the development of Silver Comet Field. Last week, Judge Brantley refused to recuse himself despite the clear appearance of impropriety created by his hearing a case where the “plaintiff’s” attorney is the Judge’s former superior officer in the military and 30 year business and political associate. Today, a newly formed civic group, Let Paulding Fly, is demanding that Judge Brantley remove himself from the case and that Michael Bowers stop doing Delta’s dirty work in Paulding County.

“Everyone already knows that this lawsuit is a sham funded by someone other than these plaintiffs to stop us from realizing the full potential of a great asset here in Paulding County, Silver Comet Field,” said Herb Haynes, one of the founders and new President of Let Paulding Fly. “Now a judge who is clearly conflicted by his relationship to the sixth law firm representing these plaintiffs, is refusing to stepdown. This further taints the legitimacy of the actions of these airport opponents and this entire process.”

The current lawsuit, aimed at blocking commercial service, was filed in December of 2013. The case was assigned to three different judges in Paulding County who all recused themselves voluntarily. In January of 2014, the suit was assigned to Judge Brantley. On April 27th of this year, the plaintiffs hired Michael Bowers, former Georgia Attorney General who unsuccessfully ran for Governor of Georgia. One week after Mr. Bowers was hired by the plaintiffs, their sixth law firm of record in the matter, Judge Brantley set a hearing date for the following week, May 12th.

Judge Brantley and Mr. Bowers have a long and significant history that spans more than 30 years. Judge Brantley was Mr. Bowers’ subordinate when he served as Mr. Bowers’ lawyer as a staff judge advocate in the Air National Guard for 10 years, until 1992. During Mr. Bowers’ 1994 re-election campaign for Georgia Attorney General, Judge Brantley served as his treasurer. When Mr. Bowers ran for Governor in 1998, Judge Brantley again served as treasurer and contributed \$5,000 to the campaign. From 2001 to 2007, Judge Brantley was Of Counsel to Mr. Bowers’ law firm – a business relationship that involved the firm paying for all of Judge Brantley’s overhead and a 50/50 split of all his fees. In 2004, Judge Brantley ran for a seat on the Georgia Supreme Court and received almost \$20,000 in campaign contributions from Bowers himself and Bowers’ law firm and family members. In 2009, when Judge Brantley sued to collect legal fees owed him, his attorney was Mr. Bowers, the case went on until 2012. In addition, this week it was revealed that Mr. Bowers’ son was Judge Brantley’s former law clerk.

Let Paulding Fly was formed after several local residents who participated in a commercial for Silver Comet Field entitled “Let Paulding Fly”, decided a pro-airport civic group was needed to combat

misinformation and misdeeds on behalf of those claiming to object to commercial service at the airport. The commercial has been running widely on cable in Paulding County for the last several weeks. The commercial can be viewed here: <https://www.facebook.com/FlySilverComet/videos/754500367982708/>

“Opening the Paulding airport to a few commercial flights per week to similarly sized airports across the region will have negligible impact on the economics of Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport’s more than 2,500 operations per day, but it will have a real and tremendous impact on the future of Paulding County, creating thousands of jobs and millions of dollars in economic development,” said Mr. Haynes. “Most of the hardworking people in this county are in favor of commercial air service. We know who is behind these lawsuits, and clearly who is funding the six law firms that are doing this work. Despite that, we remain committed to bringing jobs and businesses to Paulding County and choice and convenience to Metro Atlanta travelers.”

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