



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on July 27, 2011

Christian Judge Unfairly Vilified by Media for Being Un-Christian and Un-American

Here is how [LibertyCentral.org](#) presented the story:

Natalie Nichols, a county clerk in Texas, is fighting the local Commissioners Court after the court's June 13 vote to remove the Pledge of Allegiance and prayer from its records. Natalie refuses to remove the Pledge and prayer from the court minutes, and is standing up against Judge Sterling Lacy — one of the judges who voted for removal.



Natalie recently confronted Judge Lacy, when the judge attempted to misrepresent his involvement in the decision. She publicly called the judge out for lying — and now Lacy has instructed the local sheriff to investigate her conduct for “disrupting a public meeting.” The corresponding penalty could be as much as six months in jail, a \$2,000 fine, and losing her position as Clerk.

A reader is led to believe by the sketchy account of what happened that the judge attempted to end saying the Pledge of Allegiance and end prayer in the courtroom — an account of the facts that seems out of character for the judge and one that is disputed by the judge's version of the story.

Judge Lacy told *The New American*:

There has been a tug of war over who has the final say over the wording of the minutes of our court sessions: the court or the clerk of the court. For several months, records of the minutes failed to distinguish between what we did before we called the court to order and what we did after we called the court to order. On June 13, I ... led the court to approve the minutes for May 23 to reflect only the official business after the call to order.

We did have a devotional, prayer, and pledge on May 23 before the call to order but the amended minutes, which are called an “Order of the Court,” no longer reflected that. Of course if I'd had an inkling of an idea that we could have been demonized as being “unchristian and unpatriotic,” I never would have done that. So when the court met on July 11, we amended the amended minutes for May 23 to clearly reflect the preliminaries of devotional, prayer, and pledge and then the Call to Order followed by the record of the official business of the court of that day.

According to the judge, never at any time did he attempt to eliminate the Pledge of Allegiance or



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prayers; he merely altered the minutes of the court to reflect the fact that the Pledge and prayer took place before the official start of the court session.

But that didn't stop the sensationalism. WorldNetDaily referred to the incident as "an unholy war in Texas." Steve Doocey of *Fox & Friends* on the Fox News channel interviewed Natalie Nichols on Monday, where she indicated that Judge Lacy had physically crossed out from the monthly minutes any indications that a prayer and the Pledge had taken place — as if he were trying to whitewash the fact that those actions took place and was taking steps to stop them from happening in the future. Nichols told Doocey, "That's not gonna' happen on my watch, I'm sorry."

Doocey did introduce a quote by Lacy that explained — though again sketchily — Judge Lacy's intentions and refuted the notion that the judge was against either the Pledge or prayer: "...purposely do not place items such as the pledge and/or invocation on the Agenda and purposely perform them prior to calling the meeting to order for fear of being 'sued by an organization such as ACLU' and do not want to give the impression that it is the court's 'official stance.'"

However, Doocey went on to indicate that the judge was misleading the public by his statement and that it was "not an accurate reflection of what [actually] happened."

Likewise, Nichols attacked Lacy's explanation of the events, "It's [crossing out parts of the minutes] not a defense to a lawsuit. If somebody is going to sue you, they're not going to sue you because you wrote down that you said the prayer and the pledge; they're going to sue you because you said it."

Nichols told Doocey that the judge has been backtracking, influenced by whatever negative backlash he is facing as a result of his encounter with Nichols. She closed her interview by saying, "If I need to go to jail for standing up for this country and for God, I will do so. There's a lot of people who bled and died for this country, and I'm risking just a little bit of jail time, and I'm okay with that."

Doocey's and Fox News' reporting of the incident virtually, and unfairly, painted Judge Lacy as an anti-American, anti-God liar and made out Nichols to be a patriotic hero and champion of Christianity.

Similarly, WND attempted to compare the situation that took place with Judge Lacy in Texas to an incident that took place in Houston last week, when the Houston National Cemetery told veterans that they could no longer use the words "God" or "Jesus" during funerals or on condolence cards because those words are "offensive."

While it is certainly easy to get caught up in such sensational stories as these, it is imperative that reporting agencies are aware of all the facts, such as the facts that Lacy has been on the boards of two national Christian youth organizations, was director of religious programming at a radio station, was a chaplain in a hospital, and is on the national council of The John Birch Society (the parent organization of *The New American*). The [mission](#) of The John Birch Society is to "bring about less government, more responsibility, and — with God's help — a better world." The core principles of the organization are that personal rights come from God and that the Constitution must be restored.

It is hard to believe that Judge Lacy is guilty of what the sensational journalism has accused him.

Judge Lacy added in his defense:

A lot of people have called the courthouse lately thinking that Bowie County, Texas, has stopped having prayer and the pledge of Allegiance before our Commissioners Court sessions. Nothing could be further from the truth. This is the Commissioners Court that moved an American flag to the courtroom in January and introduced the Pledge of Allegiance to our court sessions. The



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Pledge follows our opening prayer. We are not unpatriotic. We are not un-American in Bowie County, Texas. For seven months, 14 sessions of the court, we have never failed to have an opening prayer and pledge. In fact, three months ago, I started having a devotional ahead of the prayer and pledge. We are not un-Christian in Bowie County, Texas.

Judge Lacy contends it is the goal of those involved in the accusations against him and the court to lead the public to believe the Commissioners Court has banned both the Pledge and prayer — to vilify members of the court. However, a July 11 [video](#) of the Commissioners Court undermines these claims, as Judge Lacy in particular is shown quoting Scripture, and the court is shown both praying and reciting the Pledge of Allegiance before conducting their normal business.



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