JUDGE

Continued from page A1

The commission filed a Notice of Formal Proceedings and Charges on Oct. 23, alleging Ballou violated judicial conduct rules following an incident involving Somerset attorney Kerri Bartley in September 2025.

According to the commission's filing, the allegations stem from a video Bartley recorded in a McCreary County courtroom and posted to social media in August 2025. The video included commentary about the courtroom and portraits of former judges.

The commission alleges Judge Ballou subsequently ordered Bartley to appear before him, questioned her about recording in the courtroom and made disparaging remarks about her legal education. The filing also alleges Ballou prepared an administrative order prohibiting Bartley from possessing or using electronic devices at both the McCreary County Courthouse and Whitley County Judicial Center (which encompasses the judicial circuit) before she appeared in court to address the matter.

The commission contends Judge Ballou's actions violated multiple



Circuit Judge Dan Ballou has responded to the state Judicial Conduct Commission. | FILE

provisions of the Kentucky Code of Judicial Conduct, including requirements that judges act impartially, avoid bias, and treat attorneys with dignity and courtesy.

Ballou, through his attorneys, filed an answer Monday — denying the allegations of misconduct.

In his response, Judge Ballou acknowledged the existence of previous administrative orders prohibiting electronic devices in courtrooms and maintained that Bartley violated those orders by recording and posting the video. He also argued that the court had authority to maintain order and decorum and exercise its contempt powers.

Judge Ballou's filing further argues that the commission lacks jurisdiction over the matter, that the charges were not timely filed and that the appropriate remedy would have been an appeal rather than judicial conduct proceedings.

He also raised concerns regarding due process, judicial independence and the commission's handling of the proceedings.

Judge Ballou is asking the commission to dismiss the charges. Alternatively, he requested that any potential sanction be limited to an admonition rather than the proposed public reprimand.

A hearing date was not included in the documents filed.

Judge Ballou was nominated in August by President Donald Trump to fill a vacancy on the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Kentucky that was created when former U.S. District Judge Gregory Van Tatenhove was named dean of the University of Kentucky law school.

STOCKING

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— Up to $99: Ed and Jacqueline Day.

The donations will help support the annual Christmas program, which assisted nearly 625 children last year. Organizers are encouraging continued community support to help provide Christmas assistance to children from newborn through age 17 in families with little or no income.

Family registration is scheduled for Nov. 13 and Nov. 24, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at Corbin City Hall, adjacent to the fire department.

The annual Christmas party is scheduled for Dec. 29 at 11 a.m. at Immanuel Baptist Church's gym.



Attendees of last year's Empty Stocking Fund party wait in a line filled with presents. | FILE



A tent was set up outside of the Keavy residence as federal authorities were on scene Tuesday morning. | MACEE SWAFFORD

WEDDLE

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initially overturned the council's removal and reinstated Weddle by the end of the month. However in July 2026, the Kentucky Court of Appeals reversed that decision and directed the circuit court to uphold the council's removal. Weddle then announced his resignation effective July 12.

The Sentinel-Echo reached out to Katie Anderson, the public affairs specialist with the FBI Louisville office. She provided this statement:

"FBI Louisville is conducting court-authorized activity off of Highway 552 in the London, KY area. There is no threat to public safety. Due to the ongoing nature of the investigation, I cannot comment further at this time."

The FBI has not disclosed the nature of the current investigation, or whether it is connected to any of Weddle's previous legal matters.

According to legal documents, the property where FBI Louisville is conducting court-authorized activity matches the address of Weddle.

The Sentinel-Echo reached out to Weddle's attorney, but did not receive a response as of press time.

Neighbor is taking attendance at church



ANNIE'S MAILBOX
BY ANNIE LANE

Dear Annie: My wife and I are members of a local church, though I will admit we are not exactly front-pew regulars. We go about once a month, sometimes more during holidays or when life is calmer. Our faith matters to us, but we practice it quietly and privately.

One of our neighbors and her husband also belong to the same church. They are much more involved. He does readings, and she sings in the choir. I respect that, and I admire people who give so much of their time.

The problem is that this neighbor seems to have appointed herself the church attendance monitor. At neighborhood cookouts, driveway chats and casual gatherings, she will say, in front of others, "I didn't see you in church on Sunday."

It always lands like a little public scolding. My wife and I both feel embarrassed, as if we have been called to the principal's office in front of the whole class. Sometimes there is a perfectly good reason we missed church. Sometimes we were tired, traveling, helping family or just needed a quiet Sunday at home. But I do not think we should have to explain ourselves.

We like our neighbors and do not want to create hard feelings. At the same time, our church attendance is personal, and I do not appreciate being shamed over potato salad at a block party.

What can I say that is polite, firm and maybe even a little humorous, so she gets the message without turning it into a neighborhood feud? — Keeping the Faith Privately

Dear Keeping the Faith: Your neighbor may have an important role singing in the choir, but that does not make her head of admissions.

The next time she points out that she didn't see

SEE **ANNIE,** PAGE **A9**

Now Hear This

MÉNIÈRE'S DISEASE



Carolyn Reeves, Owner
Licensed Specialist
Over 30 Yrs Experience

Ménière's disease is a disorder of the inner ear that includes episodes of vertigo with possible hearing loss, ringing or buzzing in the ear, or ear pressure.

Ménière's disease is defined by spontaneous vertigo attacks, each lasting 20 minutes to 12 hours, with lo- to mid- frequency sensorineural hearing loss in the affected ear before, during, or after one of the episodes of vertigo. The clinical practice guidelines (CPG) defines vertigo as the feeling of spinning or moving when one is not moving. This is different from dizziness, which can mean feeling lightheaded or feeling like passing out.

Ménière's disease is almost exclusively reported in adults, with less than three percent of cased estimated to occur in children younger than 18 years old. The disease is most prevalent between ages 40 to 60 years, with peak onset in the 40s and 50s. In many patients, the most detrimental decline in hearing and balance function occurs within the first decade of diagnosis, yet patients continue to have longstanding deficits that make Ménière's disease a chronic disease. It is important to evaluate and document the hearing in both ears as a subject of patients will eventually experience Ménière's disease bilaterally.

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