

## **Kent Gates**

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Office of Disciplinary Counsel  
4000 South Sherwood Blvd, St 607  
Baton Rouge, LA 70816

Dear Disciplinary Counsel:

As part of normal research into John L. Dardenne, a Baton Rouge attorney, for the Louisiana Lt. Governor's race this year, I came across information about a potential affair that he had with a woman by the name of Mary Jennings. Three people provided me with her name and the allegations. As part of due diligence, I reached out to Ms. Jennings and had several conversations with her, but I want to focus on a specific conversation that I had with on October 4, 2011.

I called Ms. Jennings to follow-up on a conversation about the need to come forward. I found her to be intimidated and somewhat in fear of retribution. She even told me that Mr. Dardenne had people speak to her about keeping quiet in the past during the height of the political campaign. Ms. Jennings confirmed again that the information I had obtained was true and that her last contact with Mr. Dardenne was in June 2006 at the time he was first running for statewide office.

Ms. Jennings informed me that there were other woman she knew about, and that the relationship began about three months before Mr. Dardenne was married to his current and only wife in or around 1985. She informed me that the relationship continued for a period of less than ten years, and the most distributing part given Mr. Dardenne's profession was that he had represented her in a civil personal injury case involving an auto accident. She then told me that he had strongly encouraged her to settle the case and never gave her the \$14,000 she was owed as part of the settlement.

I then confirmed that Ms. Jennings had indeed filed a civil suit on August 4, 1993, in the 19<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Court in the Parish of East Baton Rouge (C0806167860). On May 2, 1994, Mr. Dardenne filed a motion of counsel with the court to enroll as the counsel of record for Ms. Jennings (copy attached). Mr. Dardenne represented her through his motion of dismissal with prejudice on April 1, 1996 (copy enclosed).

In a phone conversation on October 5, 2011, Ms. Jennings told me that no less than three times she had papers drawn to file ethics charges against him for the

accusations put forth in this complaint but did not act out of fear. On the same date, I provided this information to a reporter with the Associated Press.

After serious thought and evaluation, I feel compelled to provide the Disciplinary Counsel's office with this information because of the serious and inappropriate issues raised against someone who by all other accounts has a highly respected reputation in the legal profession. I am requesting that you investigate this matter based on the fact that Mr. Dardenne is alleged to have represented a person as counsel whom he had a personal relationship, and according to the information she provided me failed to compensate her for the settlement.

Sincerely,

Kent A. Gates

Enclosures