# FAYETTE LEGAL JOURNAL

VOL. 83

## NOVEMBER 7, 2020

NO. 45



# FAYETTE LEGAL JOURNAL

The FAYETTE LEGAL JOURNAL is published weekly by the Fayette County Bar Association, 45 East Main Street, Suite 100, Uniontown, Pennsylvania 15401, 724-437-7994. Legal advertisements should be submitted online at www.fcbar.org no later than 12:00 noon on Friday for publication the following Saturday. No date of publication is promised, however. Legal notices are published exactly as submitted by the advertiser. Copyright 2001 Fayette County Bar Association. All rights reserved.

Co-Editors: Garnet L. Gordon and Melinda Deal Dellarose

Cover Design by Marvin R. Mayle, 207 Lick Hollow Road, Hopwood, PA

## FAYETTE COUNTY BAR ASSOCIATION Board of Directors

President: Louise D. Monaghan President Elect: Gretchen A. Mundorff Vice-President: Charles O. Zebley, Jr. Secretary: Anne N. John Treasurer: Vincent J. Roskovensky, II Past President: James E. Higinbotham, Jr.

Executive Director: Garnet L. Gordon

## **ETHICS HOTLINE**

The Ethics Hotline provides free advisory opinions to PBA members based upon review of a member's prospective conduct by members of the PBA Committee on Legal Ethics and Professional Responsibility. The committee responds to requests regarding, the impact of the provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct or the Code of Judicial Conduct upon the inquiring member's proposed activity. All inquiries are confidential.

Call (800) 932-0311, ext. 2214.

#### Directors Jennifer M. Casini Rachel A. Clark Jeremy J. Davis Benjamin F. Goodwin Robert A. Gordon Sheryl R. Heid Margaret Zylka House Wendy L. O'Brien Douglas S. Sholtis

## Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers

Our assistance is confidential, non-judgmental, safe, and effective

To talk to a lawyer today, call: 1-888-999-1941 717-541-4360

## ESTATE NOTICES

Notice is hereby given that letters testamentary or of administration have been granted to the following estates. All persons indebted to said estates are required to make payment, and those having claims or demands to present the same without delay to the administrators or executors named.

## **Third Publication**

#### WINDEL R. HAYES, late of Lower Tyrone

Township, Fayette County, PA (3) Personal Representatives: Jesse O. Ansell 711 N. Bell View Road Connellsville, PA 15425 Mr. Lon A. Hayes 289 School Road Dawson, PA 15428 c/o 208 South Arch Street, Suite 2 Connellsville, PA 15425 Attorney: Richard A. Husband

#### VIOLA H. HUGHES, a/k/a VIOLA J. HUGHES, a/k/a VIOLA JAYNE HUGHES,

late of Connellsville, Fayette County, PA (3) *Executor*: Martin Halfhill c/o Molinaro Law Offices P.O. Box 799 Connellsville, PA 15425 *Attorney*: Carmine V. Molinaro, Jr.

#### AUDREY M. MCDOWELL, a/k/a AUDREY M. WADE, a/k/a AUDREY M. KING, late of

Uniontown, Fayette County, PA (3) *Executrix*: Shelly Skomra c/o Fitzsimmons and Barclay 55 East Church Street, Suite 102 Uniontown, PA 15401 *Attorney*: James N. Fitzsimmons, Jr.

#### PHYLLIS TRINGES, a/k/a PHYLLIS J.

**TRINGES**, late of Georges Township, Fayette County, PA (3)

*Personal Representative*: Kathleen Ditmore c/o George and George, LLP 92 East Main Street, Suite 1 Uniontown, PA 15401 *Attorney*: G.T. George

#### RUTH B. WILKINSON, late of Uniontown,

Fayette County, PA (3) *Executrix*: Myra B. Wilkinson c/o Webster and Webster 51 East South Street Uniontown, PA 15401 *Attorney*: Webster & Webster

#### **Second Publication**

#### MARY E. BROOKS, a/k/a MARY ELLEN

**BROOKS**, late of Waltersburg, Fayette County, PA (2)

Personal Representatives: Robert Rowan and Laura L. Moore c/o Davis and Davis 107 East Main Street Uniontown, PA 15401 Attorney: Gary J. Frankhouser

#### MARTIN DENNIS YURCHISON, late of

Saltlick Township, Fayette County, PA (2) *Executor*: Matthew J. Yurchison c/o Casini and Geibig, LLC 815B Memorial Boulevard Connellsville, PA 15425 *Attorney*: Jennifer M. Casini

#### **First Publication**

#### CHERYLE J. ANSELL, late of Dunbar

Township, Fayette County, PA (1) *Executor*: George J. Harvey 505 Vanderbilt Road Connellsville, PA 15425 Co John M. Ranker & Associates, P.C. 140 South Main Street, Suite 301 Greensburg, PA 15601 *Attorney*: John M. Ranker

#### ANGELINE BLACKBURN, late of Upper

Tyrone Township, Fayette County, PA (1) *Co-Executors*: Gerald Kiliany 725 Locust Street Greensburg PA 15601

> Lisa Robbins 757 Narrows Road Connellsville, PA 15425

*Attorney*: James Lederach 201 North Chestnut Street P.O. Box 342 Scottdale PA 15683

#### DONALD E. MURPHY, SR., a/k/a DONALD

**E. MURPHY**, late of Dunbar Township, Fayette County, PA (1)

Personal Representative: Dawn M. A. Siple c/o Watson Mundorff, LLP 720 Vanderbilt Road Connellsville, PA 15425 Attorney: Timothy J. Witt

#### RONALD SECHRIST, late of Connellsville

Township, Fayette County, PA (1) *Co-Executors*: Robert Leiberger and Shirley Leiberger c/o Rowan Law Offices 890 Vanderbilt Road Connellsville, PA 15425 *Attorney*: Mark Rowan

#### JOSEPH TERRETA, late of Luzerne

Township, Fayette County PA (1) Administratrix: Judy L. Terreta c/o 51 E South Street Uniontown, PA 15401 Attorney: Anthony Dedola

## **LEGAL NOTICES**

#### NOTICE

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to the provisions of Act 295 of December 16, 1982, P.L. 1309, that a Certificate was filed in the Office of the Secretary of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, on or about October 1, 2020, to conduct a business in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, under the assumed or fictilious name of EDGE Ovens with the principal place of business at: 119 Icmi Road, Building #3, Dunbar, Fayette County, PA, 15431.

The name or names and addresses of persons owning and interested are: MF&B Restaurant Systems, Inc., 119 Icmi Road, Building #3, Dunbar, Fayette County, PA, 15431

Timothy Witt, Esquire Watson Mundorff, LLP 720 Vanderbilt Road Connellsville Pennsylvania 15425

## **JUDICIAL OPINION**

#### IN THE COURT OF COMMON PLEAS OF FAYETTE COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA CRIMINAL DIVISION

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania	:	
	:	
V.	:	
	:	
Craig Robert Gates,	:	No. 380 of 2020
Defendant.	:	Honorable Linda R. Cordaro

#### **OPINION**

Linda R. Cordaro, Judge

June 30, 2020

#### BACKGROUND

According to the Affidavit of Probable Cause in this matter, Trooper Zachary Santoro was following a Chevy Silverado for approximately half a mile. The Trooper observed the Silverado-driven by Defendant-cross over the fog line approximately three times. Based on this obsen1atio n, Trooper Santoro stopped the Silverado. Defendant displayed signs of intoxication and was charged with DUI: High Rate of Alcohol (75 Pa.C.S.A. § 3802(b)), Disregarding Traffic Lanes (75 Pa.C.S.A. § 330'9(1)), and Careless Driving (75 Pa.C.S.A. § 3714(a)).

Defendant filed an Omnibus Pretrial Motion, challenging that the stop was unconstitutional because the Trooper did not have probable cause, and that the evidence collected as a result of the stop must be suppressed. This Court agrees.

At the Hearing on the Motion, Trooper Santoro testified that he observed the Defendant drive over the center line three times (which was different than what was written in his Affidavit of Probable Cause). A Motor Vehicle Recording was submitted to the Court. The Commonwealth admitted that the video does not show the vehicle crossing the center line or the fog line. The Trooper testified that this was because the video shows only the 30 seconds before he activated his lights, and that the alleged violations occurred more than 30 seconds before his lights were activated.

This Court viewed the video after the Hearing. The video shows Defendant's vehicle within the traffic lines at all times. It also shows Defendant's vehicle come to a complete stop at a stop sign, use a proper turn signal, and make a proper left turn. Based on the Motor Vehicle Recording, Defendant appears to have been driving in accordance with the laws at all time.

#### DISCUSSION

In order to constitutionally stop a vehicle for a non-investigative detention, an officer must be able to articulate specific facts that would constitute probable cause that the driver violated the Motor Vehicle Code. Commonwealth v. Feczko, 10 A.3d 1285, 1291 (Pa. Super. Ct. 2010) (citing Commonwealth v. Gleason, 785 A.2d 983, 989 (Pa. 2001)). In Feczko, the issue was whether an officer had probable cause for stopping a vehicle that had crossed the center line twice and the fog line two or three times and was weaving in its lane, based on an alleged violation of Section 3309(1). Id. at 1286-92. The Superior Court held that the officer did have probable cause. Id. However, the officer in Feczko also observed traffic in the oncoming lane. Id. The Superior Court specifically noted that because there was oncoming traffic when the driver crossed the center line, the driver created a "significant safety hazard on the roadway." Id.

Contrary to Feczko, the facts in this case are analogous to Commonwealth v. Malone, 19 Pa. D. & C. 4th 41 (Cumberland County 1993), which this Court finds to be persuasive in its reasoning. In Malone, a driver was stopped for crossing the center line once and the fog line once. Malone at 42-43. There were no other vehicles on the road, there was no oncoming traffic, and the vehicle did not create a safety hazard by crossing the lines. Id. at 42-45. The Malone Court found that such minor deviations did not rise to a violation of Section 3309(1) of the Vehicle Code because that Section requires drivers to drive "as nearly as practicable" within a single lane of traffic. Id. at 44-45. Section 3309(1) does not require absolute compliance. Id. at 45. The Malone Court found that the officer did not have probable cause to stop the vehicle and ordered that all evidence discovered from the stop must be suppressed. Id. at 45-46.

Here, even if this Court were to credit Trooper Santoro's testimony as credible and find that Defendant crossed either the center line or the fog line three times before the video began recording, the Trooper still did not have probable cause to stop Defendant's vehicle. There was no evidence presented by the Commonwealth that Defendant created any safety hazards by crossing the center line. There were no other vehicles on the road or oncoming traffic during the time the Trooper was following Defendant. The video of the incident shows 30 seconds of Defendant driving in accordance with the Vehicle Code. Likewise, there was no evidence that Defendant's conduct constituted Careless Driving.

This Court finds that the evidence presented by the Commonwealth was insufficient to establish that the Trooper had probable cause to stop Defendant's vehicle based on any violations of the Vehicle Code. As a result, the stop was unconstitutional.

#### CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, Defendant's Omnibus Pretrial Motion is GRANTED, and all evidence collected as a result of the stop shall be suppressed.

#### ORDER

AND NOW, this 30th day of June, 2020, in consideration of Defendant's Omnibus Pretrial Motion to Suppress Evidence and after a Hearing on the matter, it is ORDERED that the Motion is GRANTED. All evidence collected as a result of the stop shall be SUPPRESSED. Counts 1-3 against Defendant shall be DISMISSED.

BY THE COURT: Linda R. Cordaro, Judge

ATTEST: Clerk of Courts

# WARMAN ABSTRACT & RESEARCH LLC

JOHN F. WARMAN

518 Madison Drive

Smithfield, PA 15478

724-322-6529

johnfranciswarman@gmail.com

COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL/CURRENT OWNER/MINERAL TITLE

A DECADE OF EXPERIENCE E&O INSURED WILL TRAVEL ACCEPTING NEW CLIENTS

## ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The Annual General Membership meeting of the Fayette County Bar Association shall be held on Wednesday, December 9, 2020, at 1:30 pm in the Fayette County Courthouse, 61 East Main Street, Uniontown, PA 15401. Members are invited to present topics of concern or interest to the Association.









www.gislaw.com

700 Grant Bldg., 310 Grant St., Pgh., PA 15219