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October 16, 2014

Via U.S. Mail

Steve Burke
Chief Executive Officer
NBC Universal
30 Rockefeller Plaza
New York, NY 10112-0002

Re: Bad Judge on NBC

Dear Mr. Burke:

On behalf of the Miami-Dade Chapter of the Florida Association for Women Lawyers ("Miami-Dade FAWL"), I write this letter to express our organization's disappointment that NBC has chosen to run the primetime television series, *Bad Judge*. Over the past 35 years, the mission of Miami-Dade FAWL has been to promote the advancement of women in the legal profession; unfortunately, *Bad Judge* is a step in the wrong direction. The show depicts a female judge as unethical, lazy, crude, hyper-sexualized, and unfit to hold such an esteemed position of power. For example, the show depicts her as follows:

1. The judge was referred to as a "muffin-top judge," with the "muffin top" referring to her breasts billowing out of the top of her shirt.
2. Her bumper sticker read, "If you are rich, I am single."
3. In open court, the judge handed her bailiff a used pregnancy test and told him to be glad—like she was—that the test was negative.
4. The judge woke up late for court due to a hangover and was depicted in bed in her underwear with a camera shot right between her legs.
5. The judge parked in a spot designated for the disabled, and then pretended to limp when others in the lot were watching her with disapproval.
6. The judge had sex with an expert witness in her chambers just minutes after she testified in her courtroom, and when her bailiff walked in on them while

Deborah B. Baker
President, Miami-Dade FAWL

they were getting dressed, he laughed.

7. The judge called a male attorney to the bench during open court and whispered to him about how his tight pants would harm the attorney's "junk," a reference to his genitals.
8. When working with a young boy she was representing on a *pro bono* basis, the judge burped and then told the boy and his school teacher that she had consumed wine and cake for breakfast.
9. That young boy had also called attention to a hickey on the judge's neck.

Our organization understands that *Bad Judge* may be intended to be hyperbole, but we nonetheless find it damaging to women in the legal profession. The show is not only offensive to the many women judges who serve with the highest levels of integrity but also dangerous to the extent those who hold preconceived notions about women judges will find their sexist beliefs reaffirmed. A misogynist who believes that women in power cannot control their sexuality, their bodies and their professional or personal conduct would have their views endorsed by this show.

It is also not lost on our organization that this show is intended to be funny. Although the Archie Bunker show of the 1970s was a comedy intended to "make fun of bigotry" it included "jokes" that included racist language such as "coon" and "n***ger." Studies were conducted regarding the effect that Archie Bunker had on the public, and the studies showed that the program reaffirmed bigoted viewers' racist opinions about Black Americans.¹ To the bigoted viewers, Archie Bunker was funny and speaking truths. It is for this reason that I write.

In this country, (i) only four of the 112 Justices ever to serve on the Supreme Court have been women; (ii) less than 35% of the active judges sitting on the thirteen federal courts of appeal are women; (iii) only 32% of the active U.S. district court judges are women; and (iv) there are still nine federal district courts around the country where there has never been a female judge.² As a result, these types of "comedy shows" depicting women in such a negative light, even in the name of "humor," have no proper place. We urge you to pull the show from prime-time television.

Sincerely,


Deborah Baker Esq.
Miami-Dade FAWL
President

¹ *Archie Bunker's Bigotry: A Study in Selective Perception and Exposure*, by Neil Vidmar and Milton Rokeach. *Journal of Communication* Volume 24, Issue 1, pages 36-47, March 1974.

² Source: National Women's Law Center, "Women in the Federal Judiciary: Still A Long Way to Go." September 10, 2014.

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With copies to:

The Honorable Anna Blackburne-Rigsby, President, National Association of Women Judges
Lisa M. Passante, President, National Association of Women Lawyers
Robin Bresky, President, Florida Association for Women Lawyers
William Hubbard, President, American Bar Association