

PRESS RELEASE

On Monday February 4, 2019 a most unfortunate incident occurred concerning a member of the legal profession and Magistrate Donna Harris which resulted in the Her Honor demanding that the member of the legal profession leave the court room. This occurrence raises serious issues which go to the heart of the administration of justice in the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis. The Bar Association is satisfied that the occurrence is by no means an isolated one. Members of the legal profession have repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with the manner, unbecoming of a Magistrate, in which Magistrate Harris addresses and conducts herself towards lawyers appearing before her. The Director of Public Prosecutions has taken the decision to suspend prosecutorial services to Magistrate Harris' court until the issues surrounding the conduct on the Bench of Magistrate Harris have been satisfactorily addressed. The St. Kitts and Nevis Bar Association wholeheartedly supports the DPP in his decision.

The St. Kitts and Nevis Bar Association is mandated by law to among other things:

1. promote good relations within the profession and between the profession and persons concerned in the administration of justice in Saint Christopher and Nevis;
2. promote, maintain and support the administration of justice and the rule of law;
3. maintain the honour and independence of the Bar in its relations with the judiciary and the executive.

While we appreciate that every judicial officer has the prerogative within the law to manage his or her Court as he or she deems appropriate, we also recognize that Attorneys-at-Law are also officers of the Court and that mutual respect between Bench and Bar is paramount in furthering the proper administration of justice.

The public deserves to have full confidence in our justice system. The Association is monitoring the situation and trusts that it will be swiftly resolved in the best interests of the rule of law.

Dahlia Joseph Rowe
President
St. Kitts and Nevis Bar Association