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Judge schedules hearing in term-limits case against Miami commissioner

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Miami-Dade Circuit Court Judge Marc Schumacher has called an unexpected status hearing for 2 p.m. Monday, in the Rev. Richard P. Dunn II's legal attempt to keep Miami Commissioner Michelle Spence-Jones off the November ballot.

Two weeks ago Judge Jorge E. Cueto ruled Spence-Jones could not seek another term in November. Schumacher was chosen randomly to replace Cueto after he stepped aside amid conflict-of-interest allegations.

With Dunn favoring Cueto's ruling and Spence-Jones asking that it be stricken because there is a new judge, Schumacher made the unusual move of telling the parties to prepare for a hearing in two weeks with testimony to determine if Cueto was too conflicted to rule on the cases.

Dunn's attorney, J.C. Planas, and Spence-Jones' attorney, Bruce Rogow, warned that potential witnesses could include judges and the head of the county's ethics commission.

Spence-Jones filed a motion two weeks ago asking Cueto to remove himself for failing to disclose he investigated her and took testimony from Miami officials in a 2007 case involving a Coconut Grove development. The investigation died and Spence-Jones was never tried for a crime.

Cueto stepped down, but his decision that Spence-Jones cannot run stands.

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