UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF GEORGIA AUGUSTA DIVISION

IN RE JOSEPH NEAL, JR.)	No. MC-112-008
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DECLARATION OF CRAIG T. JONES

- I, Craig T. Jones, do hereby declare, pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1746, that the following is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief:
- 1. I am a member in good standing of the State Bar of Georgia and the Southern District of Georgia. I have been a member of the Southern District for over twenty years, during which time I have tried several cases before Judge Bowen.
- 2. I am familiar with the professional character and reputation of Joe Neal, Jr., and I make this Declaration in Support of Joe Neal Jr.'s Motion to Vacate his suspension from practice in this federal district.
- 3. Based upon the interactions that Mr. Neal and I have had over the past several years as members of the Georgia Trial Lawyers Association, I believe that he is a highly competent lawyer as well as a gentleman, a responsible citizen, and an honorable member of our profession.
 - 4. Because I live in Atlanta, I only recently learned that Mr. Neal had

been accused of rape and that criminal charges had been filed against him in the Superior Court of Richmond County. I have been told that the most serious charge was dismissed and that Mr. Neal entered a plea to relatively minor offenses that would not disqualify him from practicing law, that were wholly unrelated to Mr. Neal's law practice or his representation of clients, and that would have no bearing upon his candor or honesty towards a Court or tribunal.

- 5. Despite the severity of the rape charge that was brought against him, the dismissal of that charge by the Superior Court Judge satisfies me that the matter is closed and should not be the basis for continuing to deny Mr. Neal the privilege of practicing law in the Southern District. If there is no legal cause for him to be prosecuted criminally based upon an accusation that was apparently unfounded, and as long as he is authorized by the State Bar to engage in the practice of law in Georgia, then I see no reason to punish him by restricting his ability to practice before this Court.
- 6. Accordingly, I hereby endorse Mr. Neal for reinstatement as a member of the Bar of the Southern District of Georgia.
- 7. I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing seven (7) paragraphs are true and correct, and that this declaration was executed on September 21, 2012 in Atlanta, Georgia.

CRAIGA. JONES Ga. Bar No. 399476

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