

# **ALA. JUDGE WEARS TEN COMMANDMENTS ON ROBE**

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*By BOB JOHNSON, Associated Press Writer*

MONTGOMERY, Ala. - A judge refused to delay a trial Tuesday when an attorney objected to his wearing a judicial robe with the Ten Commandments embroidered on the front in gold.

Circuit Judge Ashley McKathan showed up Monday at his Covington County courtroom in southern Alabama wearing the robe. Attorneys who try cases at the courthouse said they had not seen him wearing it before. The commandments were described as being big enough to read by anyone near the judge.

Attorney Riley Powell, defending a client charged with DUI, filed a motion objecting to the robe and asking that the case be continued. He said McKathan denied both motions. "I feel this creates a distraction that affects my client," Powell said.

McKathan told The Associated Press that he believes the Ten Commandments represent the truth "and you can't divorce the law from the truth. ... The Ten Commandments can help a judge know the difference between right and wrong." He said he doesn't believe the commandments on his robe would have an adverse effect on jurors. "I had a choice of several sizes of letters. I purposely chose a size that would not be in anybody's face," he said.

The case raised comparisons to former Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore, who was removed from office in 2003 for refusing to remove a Ten Commandments monument from the rotunda of the Alabama Judicial Building in Montgomery. Moore said Tuesday he supports McKathan's decision to wear the Ten Commandments robe. "I applaud Judge McKathan. It is time for our judiciary to recognize the moral basis of our law," Moore said.

Powell said if he loses his case, he expects the judge's wearing of the Ten Commandments robe to be part of an appeal.

Josh 1:7 "Only be strong and very courageous, that you may observe to do according to all the law which Moses My servant commanded you; do not turn from it to the right hand or to the left, that you may prosper wherever you go. 8 "This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success. 9 "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." (NKJ)

