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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Serious questions raised about judges

Bruce Golding's Aug. 29 article on "out-of-control" jurists ("Court officials hear firm's complaints about judges") raises serious questions about our judges, particularly Judge Louis Barone.

In 1989, members of the local bar and Pace Law School faculty turned a deaf ear as the Ninth Judicial Committee vainly sought to require impartial screening of judicial candidates and protested the illegal, three-year, seven-judge, Republican-Democratic cross-endorsement deal, engineered by party bosses Anthony Colavita and Sam Fredman. Fredman got a 14-year Supreme Court judgeship out of the deal, along with Albert Emanuelli; the other five beneficiaries of the deal all similarly ran unopposed.

Denying voters their constitutionally guaranteed right of election choice, it put the political foxes in charge of the courthouse. In 1990, after then-Supreme Court Judge Emanuelli resigned, on cue, to run, uncontested, for Westchester County surrogate, the Ninth Judicial Committee turned to the courts for relief. That corrupt deal was valiantly challenged in 1990 by Doris L. Sassower, counsel pro bono, in *Castracan v. Colavita*; again, in 1991, in *Sady v. Murphy* and in *Maxey v. Cuomo*, we sought to nullify a new "behind the scenes" deal that put Judge Barone on the Supreme Court bench. All unavailing.

Prevention is better than cure. Citizens should support the Ninth Judicial Committee's efforts to establish nonpartisan judicial screening committees. Rubber-stamp approval of unqualified judicial candidates and political cross-endorsements do not serve the public weal.

— ELI VIGLIANO
New York City

*(The writer is founder and chairman of
the Ninth Judicial Committee.)*