In the name of the Republic of Hungary!

The Pécs Court of Appeal, in the lawsuit initiated at the Somogy County Court by the First Plaintiff (address of the First Plaintiff) represented by Dr. Lilla Farkas, Attorney-at-Law (1093 Budapest, Lónyay Street 34. III/21.), against the Defendant (address of the Defendant) represented by Dr. Attila Szíjártó, Attorney-at-Law (7400 Kaposvár, Csokonai Street 2.), for the establishment of a violation of the requirement of equal treatment and the application of its legal consequences, in light of the Defendant's appeal filed under number 36 against the judgment No. 24.P.21.443/2008/35. of 30 November 2009, and the Plaintiff's cross-appeal submitted under number Pf.I.20.061/2010/3., has rendered the following

Judgment:

The Court of Appeal partially reverses the judgment of the Court of First Instance and finds that the defendant violated the requirement of equal treatment by maintaining the unlawful segregation of pupils belonging to the Gypsy ethnic minority in an educational institution, the current Kodály Zoltán Elementary School in P-i Utca, K-i, from the 2003/2004 school year onwards.

It rejects the finding of indirect discrimination in the judgment at first instance.

It also orders the defendant to cease and desist from the infringement.

For the remainder of the judgment, the judgment of the Court of First Instance is upheld.

Orders the parties to bear their own costs in the appeal proceedings.

The judgment is not subject to appeal.

Reasoning

According to the facts established by the first-instance court, the K. P. Street Primary School has been operating under the joint maintenance of the Defendant and nine other municipalities. As of 1 July 2009, it has been functioning as a branch of the K. Central Primary School. The association established for the maintenance of a total of twelve schools is managed by the Defendant municipality as the lead authority, which, among other responsibilities, ensures the financial, personnel, and material conditions for the operation of the jointly maintained institutions, exercises

employer rights over school leaders, oversees institutional supervision, and approves and, when necessary, modifies the founding documents of the schools.

The educational district No. 12 of K. city, associated with the school in question, covers the eastern part of the city, where a significant number of Roma ethnic minority individuals reside. Consequently, the vast majority of students at the district primary school are of Roma descent or from mixed marriages, with approximately 15% being non-Roma. According to the 2008 records, in the first semester of the 2008-2009 school year, 224 children in K. city were classified as multiply disadvantaged, 56 of whom (25%) attended this school. During this period, 90% of the 165 students at the school were disadvantaged.

The Defendant's Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Committee, by Resolution No. 19/2008 (VI.11.), reassigned N. Street, previously belonging to the district of the school in question, to Z. Primary School, and H. Street to K. Primary School. Furthermore, by Resolution No. 32/2008 (XI.04.), Cs. Street and H. Street were reassigned to the B. Primary School district.

In September 2009, 22 first-grade students were enrolled, six of whom did not reside within District No. 12, while 66 out of 157 students in the school lived outside the designated district.

Since the 1995/96 school year, a minority education programme on Roma culture has been in place. From the 2004/05 school year, Roma minority education exclusively in Hungarian was introduced, followed by the teaching of the Boyash language from the first grade in the 2008/09 school year on a progressive basis.

The 2006 national competency assessment ranked the school 9th out of 14 schools in the city. Results in various assessed competencies were below the average of the maintaining authority in some aspects, while in others they were average or above average. However, this school had the highest rate of grade repeaters, unjustified absences, and lower behaviour and diligence scores compared to other schools. The proportion of students opting for private education was relatively high, and the rate of students continuing to grammar schools or secondary technical schools was the lowest, while the proportion attending vocational schools was high. In 2008, the school had the highest proportion of students who did not continue their education.

Teachers at the school participate in further training programmes, and the proportion of teachers with multiple degrees and specialised qualifications is higher than the city average. The school has the lowest student-to-teacher ratio, and the smallest class sizes. Its facilities, equipment, and resources are adequate, and the organisation of extracurricular activities is comparable to other schools. The per-student financial contribution by the Defendant exceeds the average provided by the maintaining authority.

The Plaintiff, in its lawsuit, sought a declaration that Roma children at the P. Street Primary School have been unlawfully segregated from non-Roma students since the 2003/2004 school year, and that the segregated Roma students receive a lower quality education than students attending other general schools operated by the Defendant. The Plaintiff requested the court to order the Defendant to cease the violation and to eliminate the discriminatory situation by distributing Roma students across the schools maintained by the Defendant and integrating them accordingly.

The Defendant requested the dismissal of the lawsuit, arguing that it had not engaged in any conduct leading to ethnic segregation or lower-quality education. The school, in operation since 1930, serves the eastern part of K. city, and its district was not established based on ethnicity. The school's facilities are adequate, its teaching is professional, and most students and parents are satisfied with the conditions. The school is a minority educational institution where all students receive Roma cultural education, and from the 2008/2009 school year, Boyash language education has also been introduced. The Defendant claimed that redistributing Roma students to other schools would constitute racial discrimination and force parents to send their children to schools further from their residence. The Defendant submitted a resolution from the Roma Minority Municipality of K. City (Resolution No. 66/2008 (IX.15.)), which opposed any measures that would lead to the closure of the P. Street Primary School, as well as a petition signed by 203 parents objecting to the school's closure.

The first-instance court, in its judgment, established that, since the 2003/2004 school year, the Defendant has unlawfully segregated students belonging to the Roma ethnic minority at an educational institution, namely the P. Street Branch of the K. Kodály Zoltán Primary School, and discriminated against them by providing them with an education where the rate of grade repetition, school dropout, and absenteeism is higher, and the results of national competency assessments and the proportion of students continuing their studies are lower, compared to the outcomes of general primary schools operating under the Defendant's maintenance that follow the standard curriculum. The court ordered the Defendant to cease the violation, but dismissed the remainder of the claim, and ordered the Defendant to pay HUF 250,000 in first-instance litigation costs. In the reasoning of its decision, the court stated that the Defendant, through the determination of school districts, created and maintained a situation whereby, based on the demographic composition of District No. 12, Roma children receive education separately from the other schools in the city. The Defendant failed to prove that the segregation had an objectively reasonable justification as of 31 December 2006 or that it was the result of a conscious decision by the parents to ensure Roma minority education, including the segregation. Therefore, the segregation is unlawful and violates the requirement of equal treatment. The court acknowledged that the quality of education provided by the school in question cannot be classified as low based on uniform assessment criteria. However, due to the unlawful segregation of predominantly disadvantaged and multiply disadvantaged Roma children in a single school, and the lack of preparation for integration, the effectiveness of education in certain areas is lower than in comparable groups. As a result, the Defendant has violated the requirement of equal treatment by applying indirect discrimination. The first-instance court established the occurrence of the violation and ordered the Defendant to cease the unlawful practice. However, it dismissed the remainder of the Plaintiff's claim, stating that there are multiple ways to remedy the discriminatory situation, and all require a decision by the municipal body.

The Defendant appealed, seeking a partial modification of the first-instance judgment and the complete dismissal of the claim. The Defendant argued that the first-instance court wrongly concluded that the educational institution in question unlawfully segregated students of Roma ethnicity. The Defendant asserted that students attended the school as a result of a conscious parental decision, as evidenced by the fact that 66 out of 180 students do not reside within the designated school district. The Defendant further argued that the integration of Roma minority

education into the curriculum justified the separate education of Roma students from others at the school in question, as although integrated minority education is theoretically possible in majority schools, it does not exist in practice. Additionally, the Defendant pointed to a petition signed by 203 parents, which, according to the Defendant, demonstrates that the minority education provided at the school aligns with parental preferences. The Defendant also contended that the school was positively discriminated in its favour, with exceptionally good personnel and material conditions. The Defendant challenged the first-instance court's finding that the quality of education at the school was lower than that of other schools maintained by the Defendant. It argued that the services provided by the school and the standard of education ensured by the school maintainer cannot be equated with students' results in competency assessments. According to the Defendant, students' academic performance is primarily influenced by their individual abilities and the environmental factors they experience within their families and residential communities. The quality of education is determined mainly by staffing conditions, facilities, classroom and equipment availability, class sizes, and teachers' expertise, all of which, the Defendant claimed, were above average or at least met the average standards at the school in question. The Defendant further argued that Roma students have a fundamental right to receive an adequate level of education, which can be better ensured in the school in question, with smaller class sizes and a sufficient number of qualified teachers, rather than through their redistribution to other schools. Lastly, the Defendant pointed out that the school was not maintained solely by the Defendant but rather by an association of the Defendant and nine other municipal governments.

The Plaintiff filed a cross-appeal against the first-instance judgment, seeking its partial modification and full acceptance of its claim. The Plaintiff argued that the only effective legal remedy would be a detailed court order mandating the elimination of unlawful segregation, with the possibility of judicial enforcement if necessary. For the parts not affected by the cross-appeal, the Plaintiff requested the first-instance judgment to be upheld.

The appeal was partially well-founded, while the cross-appeal was unfounded.

The first-instance court correctly established the facts of the case, and the appellate court found its legal assessment regarding unlawful segregation to be correct.

According to Section 76 of the Civil Code, the violation of personality rights includes, among other things, the breach of the requirement of equal treatment.

Pursuant to Section 4/A(1) of Act LXXIX of 1993 on Public Education, those involved in the organisation, management, operation, and execution of public education tasks must adhere to the requirement of equal treatment when making decisions and taking measures. According to Section 4/A(5), the provisions of the Equal Treatment Act must also be applied when enforcing this requirement.

According to Section 7(1) of Act CXXV of 2003 on Equal Treatment and the Promotion of Equal Opportunities (Equal Treatment Act), a violation of equal treatment includes, in particular, direct

and indirect discrimination, harassment, unlawful segregation, retaliation, and instructions to engage in such conduct, as defined in Chapter III of the Act.

Pursuant to the unamended Section 10(2) of the Equal Treatment Act, in force before 1 January 2007, unlawful segregation is any conduct that, based on the characteristics defined in Section 8, separates certain individuals or groups from others without an objectively reasonable justification. This provision is further connected to the former Section 7(2) of the Equal Treatment Act, which stated that actions, conditions, omissions, instructions, or practices based on characteristics listed in Section 8 do not violate the requirement of equal treatment if they have an objectively reasonable justification directly related to the given legal relationship.

The amended Section 7(2) of the Equal Treatment Act (Equal Treatment Act), introduced by Act CIV of 2006, in line with Council Directive 2000/43/EC on the principle of equal treatment irrespective of racial or ethnic origin, no longer allows for general justification as a defence in cases of direct discrimination or unlawful segregation. Consequently, under the amended Section 10(2), any provision that separates individuals or groups based on the characteristics defined in Section 8 from others in a comparable situation—unless explicitly permitted by law—constitutes unlawful segregation.

The special provisions relating to education and training are set out in Sections 27-30 of the Equal Treatment Act. According to Section 27(3)(a), the requirement of equal treatment is violated in particular by the unlawful segregation of an individual or group within an educational institution, or in a department, class, or group established within it. However, Section 28(2)(a) states that the requirement of equal treatment is not violated if, at the initiative and voluntary choice of parents, an educational institution organises religious or other ideological education, as well as minority or nationality education, which, due to its purpose or curriculum, justifies the creation of separate classes or groups, provided that the students do not suffer any disadvantage as a result and that the education meets the state-approved, state-mandated, or state-supported requirements.

Given the date of submission of the claim, the rules of evidence applicable to this case were those of Section 19 of the Equal Treatment Act, as effective from 1 January 2007. Under this provision, the Plaintiff was required to demonstrate that the affected individual or group suffered a disadvantage or was at direct risk of suffering a disadvantage and that, at the time of the alleged violation, the affected individual or group possessed (or was perceived to possess) one of the characteristics listed in Section 8 of the Equal Treatment Act. The concept of unlawful segregation implies that it occurs without the will of the affected individuals or group to be segregated. Thus, unlawful segregation necessarily places the affected individuals at a disadvantage (Supreme Court Decision Pfv.IV.20.936/2008/4). As a result, it was sufficient for the Plaintiff to establish the likelihood that the legal elements of unlawful segregation were met. In contrast, the Defendant had the burden of proving that the alleged circumstances did not exist, that it complied with the requirement of equal treatment, or that it was not required to comply with this requirement in the specific legal relationship.

Based on the case files, it was clearly established that the school in question predominantly educated children of Roma ethnicity. This was supported—though without precise statistical

data—by an expert opinion prepared by the Commitment Pedagogical Institute at the Defendant's request, as well as by annual reports from the school principal, H.E., and particularly his testimony. At the hearing on 26 November 2008, the witness testified that, in the 2008/2009 school year, approximately 85% of the school's students were of Roma descent. Furthermore, there was no dispute between the parties that this percentage did not reflect the overall ethnic distribution of school-age children in the city. The Plaintiff successfully demonstrated that students possessing the characteristic defined in Section 8(e) of the Equal Treatment Act were subjected to segregation based on that characteristic.

The Defendant's defence was based on three main arguments: The Defendant, as the school maintainer, did not engage in any conduct leading to the segregation of students based on their ethnic origin. The Defendant was not required to comply with the requirement of equal treatment in the specific legal relationship. Until 31 December 2006, the segregation had an objectively reasonable justification under Sections 7(2) and 10(2) of the Equal Treatment Act, and the segregation was not unlawful as it resulted from the parents' explicit intention to secure Roma minority education for their children.

The appellate court, like the first-instance court, did not find the Defendant's defence well-founded.

The ethnic composition of the population in District No. 12, where the school in question is located, has significantly changed over past decades due to ongoing migration patterns. This has led to an increasing proportion of Roma residents, which, in turn, resulted in a growing number of Roma students attending the local (district) school with mandatory enrolment.

Whereas in the 1980s, only 30% of the school's students were of Roma descent (Preliminary Report No. 33), this figure rose to 75% by 1994 (Expert Opinion by József Oszvald) and reached 85% by 1998. While the Defendant cannot be held directly responsible for this demographic shift, as the local municipality responsible for defining school districts (Section 90(1) of the Public Education Act (Act LXXIX of 1993)), it had a duty, in its role as the maintainer and administrator of the public education system (Section 102(2)(d) of the Public Education Act), to take measures against spontaneous segregation, regardless of intent. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, in its General Recommendation No. 19 on Racial Segregation and Apartheid, states that segregation can constitute a violation even when it occurs through passive maintenance rather than active implementation. Furthermore, the Debrecen Court of Appeal, in its Decision Pf.I.20.683/2005, ruled that a violation occurs when segregation is maintained, even without active enforcement. In this case, the Defendant's failure to take action against spontaneous segregation constitutes unlawful segregation and violates the requirement of equal treatment.

Under Section 10(2) of the Equal Treatment Act, as effective before 1 January 2007, the Defendant was required to prove that the segregation of Roma children in a single school had an objectively reasonable justification. However, from 1 January 2007, the Equal Treatment Act no longer permitted a general justification for segregation, allowing only for the specific exemptions applicable to public education, as provided in Section 28. According to Section 28(2) of the Equal Treatment Act, ethnic minority education does not constitute unlawful segregation only if: It is

initiated and voluntarily chosen by parents, The segregation is justified by the purpose or curriculum of minority education, The quality of education is adequate, and Students do not suffer any disadvantage as a result.

Pursuant to Section 43(2) of Act LXXVII of 1993 on the Rights of National and Ethnic Minorities, a child belonging to a minority may receive education in their native language, bilingual education, or Hungarian-language education, depending on the decision of the parent. Under Section 43(4) of the same Act, a local municipality is obliged to organise minority education if at least eight parents of students belonging to the same minority request it, provided that the class can be established in accordance with the provisions of the Public Education Act.

The court-appointed expert on national minority education, O.J., provided an unequivocal opinion that the teaching method applied at the school in question—integrating the minority education curriculum into individual subjects—was permitted under the law. Furthermore, the law also allows Roma cultural studies to be taught as a separate subject, meaning that Roma studies can be taught not only in minority schools but also in general (integrated) educational institutions. The fact that such an integrated educational model had not yet been implemented and that its introduction would impose additional financial and organisational burdens on the Defendant could not be considered a reasonable justification under public education law that would render the ethnic segregation lawful.

The first-instance court correctly established that, under Section 43(4) of the National and Ethnic Minorities Act and Section 28(2) of the Equal Treatment Act, the segregation could not be deemed voluntary. According to the testimony of the school principal, the minority education introduced in 2004 was a continuation of Roma cultural studies and remedial education launched in 1997, which parents had consented to. However, parental agreement with this educational model and their acknowledged demand for minority education cannot be regarded as a conscious parental decision in favour of segregation within a single educational institution.

Similarly, the fact that, in September 2009, 66 out of the 157 newly enrolled students resided outside the designated school district cannot be interpreted as a voluntary parental choice for segregation. The school principal testified on 26 November 2008 that 98% of the students had a registered permanent address within District No. 12. Nonetheless, in the following academic year, nearly one-third of the students resided outside the district. This change correlated with the modification of school district boundaries, which reassigned four streets from the school's district to three other primary schools. Thus, it is reasonable to assume that students who began their education at this school intended to complete it there, rather than their attendance being a reflection of voluntary segregation.

It is evident that a parent's choice of school can only be considered voluntary if it is made with full knowledge of all relevant information. Thus, enrolment at the school in question could only be deemed a conscious decision if parents were aware not only of the educational programmes offered at the school but also of the conditions and curriculum available at other schools. However, based on the evidence presented in the appellate proceedings, there was no indication that parents of children attending the school had access to the necessary information before making

their decision.

The petition submitted by the Defendant did not prove that the statements contained therein were made by parents of children actually enrolled at the school, thereby excluding the possibility of relying on this document as a valid justification.

The first-instance court correctly disregarded the Defendant's argument of positive discrimination when assessing the claim regarding unlawful segregation. In public education, the doctrine of "separate but equal" has no place. Even where equal educational conditions are provided, unlawful segregation deprives minority children of equal educational opportunities. The unlawful separation of students from peers of the same age and ability creates a sense of inferiority regarding their social status and hinders their academic and psychological development (Brown v. Board of Education, 347 U.S. 483).

As the Defendant failed to prove a valid justification for segregation, the appellate court upheld the finding of unlawful segregation.

Based on Section 84(1)(a) of the Civil Code, the appellate court—partially refining the first-instance court's otherwise correct decision—established that the Defendant violated the requirement of equal treatment by maintaining the unlawful segregation of Roma students at the P. Street Branch of the K. Kodály Zoltán Primary School.

However, the appellate court did not agree with the first-instance court's legal assessment regarding indirect discrimination.

Under Section 8 of the Equal Treatment Act, as effective from 1 January 2007—which remains substantively identical to its previous version—direct discrimination occurs when a provision results in an individual or group receiving less favourable treatment based on an actual or perceived characteristic listed in points (a)-(t), compared to another individual or group in a comparable situation.

According to Section 9 of the Equal Treatment Act, indirect discrimination is any provision that, while not constituting direct discrimination and seemingly complying with the requirement of equal treatment, places individuals or groups possessing characteristics defined in Section 8 at a significantly greater disadvantage compared to other persons or groups in a comparable situation.

A specific rule applicable in public education is contained in Section 27(3)(b) of the Equal Treatment Act, which states that the requirement of equal treatment is violated, in particular, by restricting an individual or group's access to education, by establishing or maintaining an educational system or institution whose standard does not meet the professional requirements set out in regulations or does not comply with professional standards, and as a result, does not provide the opportunity for adequate preparation necessary to continue studies or pass state examinations.

According to Section 4/A(2) of Act LXXIX of 1993, the requirement of equal treatment in public education entitles every child to receive the same level of educational services under the same

conditions as others in a comparable situation.

In determining the standard of education provided at the school in question, the educational administration expert emphasised that national assessments, which the Plaintiff cited under Section 19(1)(a) of the Equal Treatment Act as evidence of disadvantage, only provide a realistic picture if they consider not only student performance but also the effectiveness of the school's teaching and educational activities, known as added pedagogical value. However, since this value cannot be determined in the absence of baseline assessments measuring the abilities of incoming students, the expert deemed the educational standard to be ascertainable based on enrolment data, further education rates, national assessment results, parent and student satisfaction surveys, the effectiveness of school education, human resources, and material conditions.

The expert, like an external expert consulted outside the litigation, unequivocally assessed the school's personnel and material conditions as positive. Notable findings included that the teaching staff was well-trained in methodology, employing cooperative, group-based teaching approaches. A so-called mentor system was introduced, under which three educators assist nine students in their studies. During lessons, high-performing students receive differentiated instruction and continuous motivation. Teachers exhibit strong empathy, and students receive considerable support in their studies. All teachers participate in further training, with a high proportion holding multiple degrees and professional qualifications. The school has the lowest student-to-teacher ratio and the smallest number of students per after-school study group. Teachers also undergo training in Roma cultural studies, and most are well-prepared and possess the necessary knowledge. The school adheres to its pedagogical programme, complies with professional standards and requirements, and ensures adequate preparation for further studies.

At the school in question, children study under appropriate material conditions. The school secures significant grant funding nearly every year and successfully attracts sponsors to support its programmes. Between 2002 and 2008, the school's facade, as well as the sanitary facilities in the main building and gymnasium, were renovated, sports flooring was installed in the gymnasium, and parquet flooring and wall cladding were replaced. The school is well-equipped with computers, has internet access, and has established a foreign-language library. Regarding per-student funding, the school ranks first in the city.

Student and parental satisfaction indicators are essentially the same as in other schools, and the school's teachers maintain regular contact with parents, conducting an exceptionally high number of home visits.

It is undeniable, however, that despite the adequate personnel and material conditions, the school in question has the highest proportion of students repeating grades and those studying under private student status, while it has the lowest rate of students continuing their education at grammar schools and secondary technical schools. Behavioural and diligence averages are the lowest, and absenteeism is the highest at this school.

Examining performance in competency assessments, it was established that the effectiveness of education in certain areas was weak, as students at the school in question did not even reach the maintaining authority's average in reading comprehension, literacy, writing quality, and unit

conversion. However, in other areas, students achieved results that were on par with or better than the maintaining authority's average, particularly in elementary arithmetic, addition, subtraction, and division. Among the fourteen schools operating in the city of K., the school in question ranked ninth overall in assessment averages across all areas.

According to the appellate court, in determining whether students at the school in question were disadvantaged by receiving a lower standard of education, all criteria defined by the educational administration expert must be evaluated comprehensively. It is not permissible to establish discrimination based on certain areas of education that are undoubtedly weaker than average while excluding results achieved in other areas from the assessment. As a result of a comprehensive evaluation of all relevant aspects, it was determined that students at the school in question were not subject to discriminatory treatment. Consequently, in accordance with Section 19(2)(b) of the Equal Treatment Act, the Defendant successfully demonstrated compliance with the requirement of equal treatment, rendering the Plaintiff's claim unfounded in this respect.

However, the unlawful situation persists as a result of the unlawful segregation. Therefore, the first-instance court, in addition to establishing the violation, correctly ordered the Defendant to cease the violation pursuant to Section 84(1)(b) of the Civil Code. In order to remedy the violation, it is also necessary to eliminate the disadvantageous situation. Accordingly, the appellate court, partially upholding the Plaintiff's claim in this respect, also ordered the Defendant to eliminate the unlawful situation pursuant to Section 84(1)(d) of the Civil Code. However, like the first-instance court, it did not specify the manner in which this should be achieved. The segregation at the school in question arose not within a civil law relationship but within a public law framework, meaning that the rules of civil law are not suited to regulating the manner in which segregation should be eliminated. The determination of such measures falls within the sphere of public law, meaning that the unlawful situation can only be remedied through public law instruments.

Like the first-instance court, the appellate court did not find it necessary to include the nine other municipalities participating in the association agreement as parties to the proceedings. The contracts clearly establish that, concerning the school in question, the Defendant exercises the relevant powers and responsibilities related to the maintenance and management of public education, which are relevant for adjudicating the claim pursuant to Section 102(2) of the Public Education Act.

In light of the foregoing, the appellate court partially modified the first-instance judgment pursuant to Section 253(2) of the Code of Civil Procedure, while upholding it in all other respects.

The Defendant's appeal was partially successful, while the Plaintiff's cross-appeal was unsuccessful. Consequently, pursuant to Section 81(1) of the Code of Civil Procedure, the appellate court ruled that each party shall bear its own costs incurred in the appellate proceedings. Pursuant to Section 5(1)(b) and (f) of Act XCIII of 1990 on Fees, the parties were granted personal exemption from fees in the proceedings. Therefore, in accordance with Section 4(1) of the same Act, and in consideration of the right to defer the procedural fee, the unpaid appellate procedural fee shall be borne by the state pursuant to Section 14 of Decree 6/1986 (VI.26.) of the Ministry of Justice on the Application of Legal Aid.

Pécs, 20 May 2010

Dr. Tamás Lábady, s.k. presiding judge, Dr. Tünde Kutasi s.k. Judge-Rapporteur, Dr. Adrienn Hrubi s.k. Judge