

Circuit Court for Baltimore City
Case No.: C-24-CV-24-001858

UNREPORTED
IN THE APPELLATE COURT
OF MARYLAND*

No. 1439

September Term, 2025

DR. FREDERICK WARE-NEWSOME

v.

JUDGE JENNIFER ETHERIDGE

Zic,
Tang,
Zarnoch, Robert A.
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

PER CURIAM

Filed: July 8, 2026

*This is a per curiam opinion. Under Rule 1-104, the opinion is not precedent within the rule of stare decisis, nor may it be cited as persuasive authority.

Dr. Frederick Ware-Newsome appeals from a judgment of the Circuit Court for Baltimore City dismissing his complaint against the Honorable Jennifer Etheridge, a judge sitting in the District Court of Maryland for Baltimore City. We shall affirm the judgment.

Dr. Ware-Newsome’s complaint against Judge Etheridge stems from a landlord-tenant action in the District Court which resulted in his eviction from an apartment located on North Charles Street in Baltimore. Judge Etheridge apparently entered an order allowing the eviction to proceed.

Judge Etheridge moved to dismiss the complaint with prejudice for failing to state a claim upon which relief may be granted. She maintained that she “enjoys judicial immunity and statutory qualified immunity” and, furthermore, that Dr. Ware-Newsome had failed to comply with the Maryland Tort Claims Act which requires a claimant suing the State or its personnel to first submit a timely written claim to the State Treasurer. The circuit court granted the motion after concluding that the complaint “does not allege sufficient facts to state a claim upon which relief can be granted[,]” specifically finding that Dr. Ware-Newsome “does not allege any facts in the Complaint that overcome [Judge Etheridge’s] immunity or that demonstrate compliance with the Maryland Tort Claims Act.”

On appeal, Dr. Ware-Newsome raises three questions for this Court’s review:

1. Did Judge Jennifer Etheridge, as an Associate Judge in Baltimore City District Court, have the authority to operate outside her jurisdiction and function as a Supreme Court Justice ruling on a case that was in their jurisdiction?

2. Did Judge Jennifer Etheridge, as an Associate Judge in Baltimore City District Court, have the right and authority to rule on a case that was with the Supreme Court of Maryland?
3. Did Judge Jennifer Etheridge have the right and the authority to execute her ruling?

The only issue properly before this Court, however, is whether the circuit court erred in granting Judge Etheridge’s motion to dismiss the complaint. This Court summarized the standard of review of the grant of a motion to dismiss in *Grier v. Heidenberg*, 255 Md. App. 506, 520 (2022):

When reviewing the grant of a motion to dismiss a complaint for failure to state a claim upon which relief can be granted, the appropriate standard of review “is whether the trial court was legally correct.” *Davis v. Frostburg Facility Operations, LLC*, 457 Md. 275, 284, 177 A.3d 709 (2018). Appellate courts “review the grant of a motion to dismiss de novo [and will] affirm the circuit court’s judgment on any ground adequately shown by the record, even one upon which the circuit court has not relied or one that the parties have not raised.” *Sutton v. FedFirst Fin. Corp.*, 226 Md. App. 46, 74, 126 A.3d 765 (2015) (cleaned up), *cert. denied*, 446 Md. 293, 132 A.3d 195 (2016).

In this exercise, an appellate court:

must assume the truth of, and view in a light most favorable to the non-moving party, all well-pleaded facts and allegations contained in the complaint, as well as all inferences that may reasonably be drawn from them, and order dismissal only if the allegations and permissible inferences, if true, would not afford relief to the plaintiff, *i.e.*, the allegations do not state a cause of action for which relief may be granted. Consideration of the universe of “facts” pertinent to the court’s analysis of the motion are limited generally to the four corners of the complaint and its incorporated supporting exhibits, if any.

RRC Ne., LLC v. BAA Maryland, Inc., 413 Md. 638, 643, 994 A.2d 430 (2010) (cleaned up).

In his complaint, Dr. Ware-Newsome stated, in the entirety, the following:

I am filing this lawsuit because District Court Judge Etheridge functioned outside of her jurisdiction. Judge Etheridge ruled on my case on November 3, 2023, but the case had been transferred to the Supreme Court of Maryland as of September 14, 2023. She clearly was functioning outside of her jurisdiction.

Maryland Special Court of Appeals Chief Judge Gregory Wells forwarded my case to the Maryland Supreme Court, therefore once again, Judge Etheridge had no jurisdiction over this case.^[1]

Therefore, I am filing this complaint and requesting settlement of \$250,000 for causing me to be evicted from my apartment at [address omitted], while my case was still on appeal.

The complaint is devoid of any facts or allegations that Judge Etheridge acted outside the official scope of her duties as a judge. He simply alleged that Judge Etheridge had no jurisdiction to rule on his case at the time because of a pending request for an appeal in that case.

We find no error in the circuit court’s conclusion that judicial immunity barred the action. *Keller-Bee v. State*, 448 Md. 300, 305 (2016) (“The doctrine of absolute judicial immunity bars civil suits against judges for acts done by them in the exercise of their judicial functions.”) (cleaned up). *See also Parker v. State*, 337 Md. 271, 277 (1995) (“The principle that judicial officers should be immune from all civil liability for their judicial

¹ Dr. Ware-Newsome filed a notice of appeal from a decision of the District Court in his landlord-tenant case, which this Court transferred to the Maryland Supreme Court, who treated the notice as a petition for writ of certiorari. *See* Md. Code Ann., Cts. & Jud. Proc. § 12-302(a) and Md. Rule 8-102. On January 23, 2024, the Supreme Court denied the petition (Petition No. 202, Sept. Term, 2023).

acts has been part of the common law since very early days.”). Accordingly, the circuit court did not err in dismissing the case.

**JUDGMENT OF THE CIRCUIT COURT
FOR BALTIMORE CITY AFFIRMED.
COSTS TO BE PAID BY APPELLANT.**