COMMONWEALTH OF THE BAHAMAS

IN THE SUPREME COURT

Family Division

2016/FAM/div/00340

B E T W E E N:

S.V.R.

Petitioner

AND

S.L.R

Respondent

Before: **The Honorable Justice C.V. Hope Strachan**

Appearances: **Marylee Braynen-Symonette for the Petitioner**

Lillith Smith – Mackey and Nicholette Burrows for the Respondent

Hearing date: **11th April, 2024; 31st October, 2024; 13th March, 2025; 14th July, 2025 4th March, 2025**

Application For Recusal, Applicable Principles, Finding The Procedural History, Application Of The Fair Minded Observer Test, Judge's Duty To Sit And Adjudicate Matters, Duty To Guard Against Forum Shopping.

RULING

Introduction

[1.] This is the Respondent's ("the Husband") application that the learned Judge recuse herself from further conduct of these ancillary-relief proceedings, and that the matter be reassigned. The Husband relies on apparent bias and procedural unfairness. He does not allege actual bias, personal prejudice, or impropriety.

[2.] The Husband's principal complaint concerns the order of 31st October, 2024 directing appraisals of the former matrimonial home and **five (5)** further properties identified in the Petitioner's ("the Wife") Affidavit of Means. He contends that the order required him to pay the appraisal costs in the first instance despite the absence of proof that he owned all the relevant properties. The Wife submits that the application is without foundation when the procedural history and the terms of the orders are considered as a whole.

[3.] For the reasons which follow, I find that the application has not established a real possibility of bias. It is dismissed.

Husband's Submissions

[4.] Counsel for the husband submits that this is an application for the recusal of the learned Judge from the further conduct of the proceedings on the grounds of apparent bias. No allegation is made of actual bias, impropriety, or personal prejudice. The application is advanced on the established principle that the administration of justice must command public confidence and must be seen to be impartial: **R v Sussex Justices, ex parte McCarthy** [1924] 1 KB 256. The applicable question, counsel submits, is whether the fair-minded and informed observer, having considered all relevant circumstances, would conclude that there is a real possibility of bias: **Porter v Magill** [2002] 2 AC 357.

[5.] Counsel submits that the application arises from the cumulative effect of interlocutory rulings and observations made at a number of hearings. On 31st October 2024, the learned

Judge directed that certain properties be appraised and that the husband meets the costs in the first instance. Counsel relies upon the transcript passage:

> "the Respondent is to cover the cost of the appraisal in the first instance…"

It is submitted that the order was made without title documents, conveyances, or affidavit evidence establishing that the husband owned the relevant properties. The husband's case is that the order accordingly imposed a financial burden founded upon an issue of ownership which had not been proved.

[6.] Counsel further relies upon the hearing of 13th March 2025, when the learned Judge observed that "there was no application before the Court in relation to any allegation of ownership or non-ownership" and that "the Court is confused because no affidavit evidence is before the Court…" Nevertheless, it is submitted, the orders remained in operation. Counsel also refers to the learned Judge's observation that, "if the wife is saying that he owns them… then the Court has to take that into consideration…" The husband accepts that an allegation may require consideration but submits that it could not properly supply the evidential basis for coercive orders affecting alleged property rights. On 14th July 2025, it was expressly submitted that the husband "has never been the owner of the property and therefore will not comply", yet, counsel submits the earlier obligations were neither revisited nor suspended.

[7.] Counsel submits that the practical effect has been an unequal interim position, the husband has been required to meet appraisal costs and other burdens relating to the properties, while the wife has received rental income, subject to the direction that "the wife shall… give an account of the rental income collected." It is contended that this has conferred an economic benefit upon the wife before ownership or entitlement has been determined, notwithstanding that the properties are mortgaged, and the husband says that he alone has borne the mortgage obligations.

[8.] As to the governing principles, counsel submits that the fair-minded and informed observer is neither complacent nor unduly sensitive or suspicious but considers the full

factual context objectively: **Helow v Secretary of State for the Home Department** [2008] 1 WLR 2416. The doctrine protects public confidence in the administration of justice, including against a real possibility of unconscious bias: **Lawal v Northern Spirit Ltd** [2003] UKHL 35. Counsel submits that apparent bias may arise from the conduct of proceedings, not merely from a personal or financial connection: **Locabail (UK) Ltd v Bayfield Properties Ltd** [2000] QB 451. Reliance is also placed upon **Persimmon Homes Teesside Ltd v R (Lewis)** [2008] EWCA Civ 746 in support of the proposition that a decision-maker must not approach a matter with a closed mind or treat an outcome as predetermined.

[9.] Applying those principles, counsel submits that the repeated making and maintenance of orders dependent upon unproved ownership, notwithstanding the acknowledged absence of affidavit evidence and the husband's express denial of ownership, would lead the fair-minded and informed observer to conclude that there is a real possibility that the husband's case has not been approached impartially. It is submitted that the wife's assertions have, in effect, been treated as sufficient while the husband has been subjected to binding financial obligations. The husband contends that it is the cumulative pattern, rather than any isolated ruling, which gives rise to the appearance of predetermination and a lack of even-handedness. Counsel relies on **Taylor v Lawrence** [2002] EWCA Civ 90, as emphasizing the importance of preserving confidence in the integrity of the judicial process.

[10.] The husband accordingly invites the Court to order that the learned Judge recuse herself from further conduct of the proceedings; to stay the matter pending reassignment; to set aside or suspend the existing interlocutory property-related orders; and to grant such further or other relief as the Court considers just.

Wife's Submissions in Opposition to the Recusal Application

[11.] Counsel for the wife submits that the husband's application, filed on 21st July 2025, seeks the transfer of the ancillary-relief proceedings to another judge and the learned Judge's recusal on grounds of apparent bias and procedural unfairness. The application alleges that the order of 31st October, 2024 imposed obligations upon the husband in respect of properties which he says he does not own, that the wife has not proved his ownership, and that the

Court's failure to vary the order has created an appearance of bias. The wife opposes the application as unfounded and submits that its merits must be assessed against the full procedural history and the hearing transcripts.

[12.] Counsel submits that the governing test is whether a fair-minded and informed observer, having considered all the relevant circumstances, would conclude that there is a real possibility of bias. Reliance is placed upon **Save Guana Cay Reef Association Ltd and others v R and others** [2009] UKPC 44, applying the test in **Porter v Magill** [2002] 2 AC 357, and upon **Albury's Freeport Ltd v Waugh Construction (Bahamas) Ltd,** SCCiv App No. 74 of 2022. It is submitted that a recusal application is fact-specific; it must identify a proper, concrete factual basis and the logical connection between the matter complained of and an apprehended departure from adjudication on the legal and factual merits. It is not, counsel submits, a matter of convenience or a means of securing delay or a different tribunal.

[13.] Counsel submits that a judge is presumed impartial and is under a corresponding duty to sit unless a proper ground for disqualification is established. Reference is made to **Re: Bernard E. Evans Ex Parte The Bahamas Communications and Public Officers Union Pension Plan and Trust Fund** 2017/COM/bnk/00007, which treated the judicial oath, judicial training, and professional discipline as relevant to the presumption that a judge will decide a case on its evidence and merits; and to **Adrian Paul Gibson et al v Director of Public Prosecutions**, SCCrApp No 22 of 2026, which emphasized both the need for a concrete foundation for recusal and the judicial duty to sit. Counsel further submits that an allegation of perceived bias necessarily engages both the individual judge's integrity and public confidence in the judicial system, and should therefore be advanced only on proper facts and sound legal authority.

[14.] Counsel submits that the wife commenced divorce proceedings in June, 2016 and obtained a decree of divorce in November, 2016, with ancillary relief adjourned to chambers. On 15th November 2023, she filed her notice of intention to proceed with ancillary relief and an affidavit of means. She sought relief in respect of the former matrimonial home and identified further properties said to be held by the husband, including properties in Lyford

Hills, Central Pines, Exuma, Spring City, and Congo Town. Her evidence was that those properties had been acquired by, or conveyed to, the husband in his sole name. The wife's materials were served upon the husband's then attorneys on 23rd February 2024.

[15.] At the first hearing on 11th April 2024, the husband had not filed his affidavit of means. His counsel indicated that a draft affidavit and submissions had been prepared but not filed, and proposed that the matter eventually be determined on the papers, subject to any cross-examination. The wife did not oppose an adjournment, on the basis that the Court required the husband's evidence of means. The Court directed the filing and service of the husband's affidavit, a response by the wife, if necessary, notices to cross-examine, and an adjournment of the substantive hearing. Although the parties had agreed wasted costs of **Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars ($2,500.00)**, the Court awarded the wife **Two Thousand Dollars ($2,000.00)** in costs, payment of which was not required before the conclusion of the matter. Counsel submits that this exercise of discretion is inconsistent with any suggestion that the Court was biased against the husband.

[16.] The husband filed his Affidavit of Means late, on 3rd May 2024. Counsel submits that he did not therein dispute ownership of the properties identified by the wife, save to oppose a 50/50 division on the grounds that her contributions had been minimal. The substantive hearing was later adjourned at the husband's insistence, following a change in his legal representation. At the ensuing hearing on 31st October 2024, the husband was represented by counsel holding brief, and the hearing did not proceed because counsel was not the attorney with conduct of the matter.

[17.] Counsel submits that, during the hearing of 31st October, 2024, the wife sought appraisals of the properties listed in her affidavit. Counsel then representing the husband proposed that the costs be shared proportionately but accepted that, if the husband were better able to pay, he could meet the appraisal costs in the first instance. The parties also agreed that a joint appraisal process would avoid unnecessary expense. The learned Judge ordered appraisals by appraisers agreed between the parties, required the husband to bear the costs upfront, and reserved the wife's obligation to contribute one half until the conclusion of

the matter and a determination as to distribution. It is submitted that this was a case-management order made in the context of unchallenged affidavit evidence and the parties' joint position; it neither determined nor purported to determine ownership of any property.

[18.] Counsel submits that the husband again failed to comply with the directions made on 31st October 2024. His affidavit was due by 24th January, 2025 but was not filed until 12th March 2025, the day before the next hearing. He provided an appraisal of the former matrimonial home alone and then asserted, for the first time, that he did not own the Lyford Hills and Exuma properties. He sought an interim order concerning the former matrimonial home, the wife's earnings, the other properties, and the husband's business. The husband himself did not attend the hearing on 13th March 2025, despite the earlier order requiring both parties' attendance for cross-examination.

[19.] At the hearing on 13th March 2025, counsel for the husband acknowledged non-compliance with the appraisal order and attributed it, inter alia, to difficulties obtaining the prior attorneys' file, the alleged absence of ownership of certain properties, and the husband's unwillingness to advance all appraisal costs. Counsel for the wife submitted that the alleged lack of ownership had not previously been raised despite the husband's receipt of the wife's Affidavit, and his representation at the October, 2024 hearing. The learned Judge observed that the husband could at any time have stated in an affidavit that he did not own the properties for which appraisals were sought, thereby permitting the issue to be properly identified and addressed.

[20.] Counsel submits that, far from ignoring the husband's position, the learned Judge allowed him a further opportunity to place his case before the Court. The order made on 13th March, 2025 required him, by 28th April, 2025, to file and serve an affidavit addressing ownership of the properties identified in the November, 2024 order and to produce the backing sheets of the relevant conveyances. The order further provided that, unless he did so, any proposal advanced by him would not be considered. The wife was permitted to reply, if necessary. The matter was adjourned for cross-examination, and costs were reserved. The

Court also made interim directions concerning the collection and accounting of rent from a unit appurtenant to the former matrimonial home.

[21.] The Husband did not comply with the 28th April, 2025 direction. Instead, by letter of 11th July 2025, shortly before the next hearing, he invited the learned Judge to recuse herself. At the hearing on 14th July, 2025, counsel holding brief stated that, the recusal request was based upon the husband's instructions and his view, arising from the orders in the matter, that there was apparent bias. The formal motion and supporting affidavit had not then been filed. The learned Judge directed the filing of a formal application and supporting submissions, thereby allowing the husband to particularize and pursue the allegation properly. Although the motion and affidavit were filed on 21st July, 2025, the husband did not provide his written submissions by the later date directed and was afforded a further adjournment in March, 2026. His submissions were eventually served upon the wife on 27th April, 2026.

[22.] Counsel submits that this history demonstrates repeated indulgence towards the husband despite late filings, non-compliance with directions, changes of legal representation, failure to obtain appraisals, and failure to attend a hearing at which he had been directed to be present. The wife's case is that any evidential deficiency was attributable not to unfairness by the Court, but to the husband's failure to place a timely, clear and properly supported case before it. In those circumstances, it is submitted, the fair-minded and informed observer would see the learned Judge as having sought to permit the husband to be heard and to regularize his evidence, rather than as having approached his case with bias.

[23.] Counsel rejects the husband's contention that the appraisal order was made in the absence of evidence. The wife's affidavit of means, filed in November, 2023, expressly identified the properties and set out the factual basis upon which she said they were owned by the husband. In particular, she deposed to the acquisition of Lot 86, Central Pines in the husband's name and exhibited a conveyance; to the acquisition of Lot 35, Lyford Hills in the husband's sole name; to the acquisition of the Exuma, Spring City, and Congo Town properties; and to the husband's receipt of rental income from the Abaco property. That

sworn Affidavit evidenced was not initially challenged by the husband, notwithstanding that he had received it well before the relevant hearings.

[24.] Counsel submits that the husband's characterization of the wife's case as a mere allegation is therefore inaccurate. Her Affidavit constituted evidence, albeit evidence to be tested if ownership was placed in issue. The husband had several opportunities to dispute it: in his affidavit of means filed in May, 2024; at the hearings in April and October, 2024; and upon the making of the October, 2024 appraisal order. He did not do so. Nor did his counsel object to appraisal of the properties or to the proposed arrangement that the Husband meet the costs upfront, subject to later adjustment. The Court thus made no finding of ownership, it made a procedural order directed to obtaining valuation evidence in respect of assets which were then identified in unchallenged affidavit evidence.

[25.] Counsel also submits that the husband has misattributed and taken out of context certain observations said to have been made on 13th March, 2025. The wife's review of the transcript did not locate the statement attributed to the learned Judge that there was "no application before the Court in relation to any allegation of ownership or non-ownership." Counsel submits that a similar statement was made by counsel for the husband at the hearing on 14th July 2025. In any event, the appraisal order did not decide ownership; and when the ownership dispute was raised, the Court specifically directed the husband to identify, by affidavit and relevant conveyance backing sheets, the properties he said he did not own.

[26.] Similarly, counsel submits that the husband's reliance upon the asserted comment, "if the wife is saying that he owns them… then the Court has to take that into consideration," cannot establish apparent bias. The wife's sworn affidavit was evidence which had not been put in issue at the time of the appraisal order. Moreover, when the husband subsequently asserted that he did not own certain properties, the Court gave him the opportunity to state and substantiate that position on the Affidavit. He did not comply with that direction. The wife submits that these circumstances are incompatible with the allegation that the learned Judge treated the wife's assertion as conclusive proof, or ignored the husband's contrary case.

[27.] Counsel further submits that the husband's alleged express denial of ownership on 14th July, 2025 cannot retrospectively impugn orders made on 31st October, 2024 and 13th March, 2025. The Court had, by its March order, already directed him to state his ownership position by affidavit. Thus, rather than disregarding his assertion, the Court afforded him a defined means by which to establish and ventilate it. It is submitted that the husband's continuing refusal or failure to comply with that opportunity does not transform the Court's case-management decisions into evidence of apparent bias.

[28.] It is accordingly submitted that the husband has not identified a proper factual foundation for recusal, nor any logical basis for saying that the learned Judge may determine the ancillary-relief application other than on its evidence and merits. The fair-minded and informed observer, apprised of the full history, would recognize that the wife advanced sworn evidence of the alleged assets; that the husband initially failed to challenge that evidence or comply with orders; that the appraisal order followed the parties' discussions and did not determine ownership; and that the learned Judge repeatedly permitted the husband opportunities to file evidence and articulate his case.

[29.] The wife therefore invites the Court to dismiss the husband's motion for recusal. Counsel submits that the application is without merit, is unsupported by proper facts or authority, and has had the effect of delaying the substantive adjudication of the wife's ancillary-relief application. The wife seeks her costs of the application, to be taxed if not agreed.

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Applicable Principles

[30.] The governing test is settled. The Court must first ascertain all circumstances bearing upon the allegation and then ask whether a fair-minded and informed observer would conclude that there was a real possibility that the tribunal was biased: **Save Guana Cay Reef**

Association Ltd v The Queen [2009] UKPC 44, [50]; **Porter v Magill** [2002] 2 AC 357 [103].

[31.] The inquiry is objective. It is not answered by the subjective belief, concern, or dissatisfaction of the party advancing the complaint.

[32.] The hypothetical observer is neither complacent nor unduly sensitive or suspicious. That observer considers the full context, including the matters which may detract from, as well as those which may support, an appearance of bias: **Helow v Secretary of State for the Home Department [2008] UKHL 62, [2]-[3].** The application must therefore identify a concrete factual basis and a logical connection between the circumstances relied upon and a feared departure by the judge from determination of the matter according to law and evidence.

[33.] These principles are consistent with the Bahamian authorities cited by the parties, including **Albury's Freeport Ltd v Waugh Construction (Bahamas) Ltd,** SCCiv App No 74 of 2022; **Re Bernard E Evans** 2017/COM/bnk/00007; and **Adrian Paul Gibson et al v Director of Public Prosecutions**, SCCrApp No 22 of 2026. They emphasize the fact-specific and contextual nature of the inquiry, the need for a proper foundation for recusal, and the countervailing judicial duty to sit where no proper ground of disqualification is established.

[34.] The Court is mindful that public confidence in the administration of justice is the object of the doctrine. It follows, however, that the doctrine does not permit a conclusion of apparent bias merely because a judge has made interlocutory or case-management orders adverse to one party. The full circumstances must objectively support the requisite real possibility of bias: **Lawal v Northern Spirit Ltd** [2003] UKHL 35, [14], [21]-[23].

Findings on the Procedural History

[35.] The wife's Notice of Intention to Proceed with Ancillary Relief and Affidavit of Means were filed in November, 2023 and served upon the husband's then attorneys on 23rd February 2024. Those materials identified the former matrimonial home and the additional properties

which are now the subject of complaint. The wife gave sworn evidence as to the acquisition and asserted ownership of those properties, including evidence that Lot 86, Central Pines was acquired in the husband's name and an exhibited conveyance. Her evidence was not, at that stage, challenged by an affidavit from the husband.

[36.] At the hearing of 11th April 2024, the husband had not filed an affidavit of means. The hearing was adjourned to enable him to do so. The Court made directions for filing and service and for any intended cross-examination. Although the parties had agreed wasted costs of **Two Thousand Five Hundred Dollars ($2,500)**, the Court ordered the husband to pay **Two Thousand Dollars ($2,000)** only and did not require payment before completion of the proceedings. That decision does not support, and tends rather to contradict, the proposition that the Court had adopted an unfair posture towards the husband.

[37.] The husband's Affidavit of Means was filed late on 3rd May, 2024. It did not then deny ownership of the properties identified by the wife. The hearing fixed for July, 2024 was further adjourned following the husband's change of legal representation

[38.] At the hearing on 31st October 2024, counsel then appearing for the husband did not object to the properties being appraised. Counsel proposed that appraisal costs be shared proportionately, but accepted that the husband might meet the costs upfront if, as was asserted, he was better able to do so. Counsel also supported a joint appraisal process. The order made thereafter required the appraisals to be undertaken by appraisers agreed between the parties; the husband was to bear the cost in the first instance; and the wife's obligation to pay half, was expressly reserved until the end of the matter and a determination as to the distribution of property.

[39.] Properly construed, that order did not determine the ownership of any property. It was an interlocutory direction designed to obtain valuation evidence in proceedings where the properties had been identified in the wife's unchallenged sworn evidence and where, through counsel, the husband had not objected to their appraisal. The arrangement concerning

payment was an interim allocation of cost, subject to later adjustment. It was not a judicial finding that the husband owned every property in issue.

[40.] The Husband did not comply with the subsequent directions for filing and appraisals. In an Affidavit filed on 12th March, 2025, the day before the next hearing, he asserted for the first time that he did not own the Lyford Hills and Exuma properties. At the hearing on 13th March, 2025, the Court did not dismiss or disregard that contention. To the contrary, the Court directed the husband to file and serve an affidavit identifying the properties he said he did and did not own and to provide the backing sheets of the respective conveyances. The wife was given an opportunity to respond. That was a measured direction to defining and evidentially resolving the issue which the husband had then raised.

[41.] The husband did not comply with that direction either. Instead, shortly before the hearing of 14th July 2025, he wrote inviting the learned Judge to recuse herself. At that hearing, although no formal motion or supporting affidavit had yet been filed, the Court permitted the husband to bring a formal application and to submit further written submissions. Later, notwithstanding a failure to serve those submissions within the time directed, he was afforded a further opportunity to do so. These circumstances demonstrate procedural accommodation of the husband's ability to advance his case, rather than a lack of impartiality.

Application of the Test

[42.] I have considered the husband's submission that the order of 31st October, 2024 lacked an evidential basis because there were no title documents or affidavit evidence proving ownership. I do not accept that characterization. The wife had placed sworn evidence before the Court identifying the properties and setting out the basis upon which she alleged that they were acquired by, or held in the name of the husband. Whether that evidence ultimately establishes ownership or beneficial entitlement is a matter for determination on the merits. It was nevertheless evidence upon which the Court could make an interlocutory case management order, particularly in the absence of any then-articulated challenge by the husband.

[43.] The husband further relies on statements attributed to the learned Judge during the hearings. I accept that judicial observations must be read in their proper setting. The relevant exchanges, considered as a whole, show that the Court was concerned with the absence of a clear and timely position from the husband as to ownership, and with the need for that position to be placed before the Court formally. The Court's response was not to assume that the wife's evidence was determinative. It was to direct the husband to identify his position in affidavit evidence and to support it with the relevant conveyancing material.

[44.] I do not accept that the direction concerning appraisals and the interim collection of rent created an appearance that the ultimate outcome had been predetermined. The appraisal order was expressly interlocutory and made provision for subsequent adjustment of costs. The direction requiring the wife to account for rental income was likewise an interim accounting direction. Neither order adjudicated the competing proprietary claims. The ultimate ownership, entitlement, valuation, and distribution issues remain to be determined on the evidence.

[45.] The husband submits that the cumulative effect of the Court's conduct has produced an uneven process. I have assessed the matter cumulatively. The history reveals repeated non-compliance by the husband with filing, appraisal, and attendance directions; changes in representation; and successive opportunities given to him to regularize his position and adduce further evidence. The fact that the Court sought to progress the ancillary-relief application despite those difficulties, while allowing the husband additional opportunities to put forward his case, cannot objectively amount to apparent bias.

[46.] The cases concerning a closed mind or predetermination do not assist the husband. They require circumstances which objectively show that the decision-maker has foreclosed proper consideration of the material issues. **Persimmon Homes Teesside Ltd v R (Lewis)** [2008] EWCA Civ 746 distinguishes an impermissibly closed mind from a permissible preliminary disposition and underscores the need to identify, with precision, the facts said to establish predetermination. There are no such facts here. The learned Judge has not decided the

ownership issue; instead, she directed the means by which it should be properly raised and evidenced.

[47.] The husband's reliance on the broad proposition that justice must be seen to be done does not alter the result. That principle is fundamental**: R v Sussex Justices, ex parte McCarthy** [1924] 1 KB 256. It is given practical content by the objective test in **Porter v Magill**. Applying that test, a fair-minded and informed observer would be aware of the wife's sworn evidence, the husband's initial failure to contest it, the parties' position at the October, 2024 hearing, the interlocutory and non-determinative character of the orders, and the repeated opportunities afforded to the husband. Such an observer would not conclude that there was a real possibility that the learned Judge was biased.

[48.] I also bear in mind that a recusal application should not be used to secure a forensic advantage, a different judge, or further delay. The Court of Appeal's observations in **Albury's Freeport** and the authorities cited in **Re Bernard E Evans** properly emphasizes the judicial duty to sit in the absence of a valid ground for recusal. That duty is engaged here. To recuse in circumstances where the established test is not met would risk undermining, rather than advancing, the proper administration of justice.

Disposition

1. The husband has not established a proper factual basis upon which a fair-minded and informed observer would conclude that there is a real possibility that the learned Judge is biased. The application for recusal and reassignment is therefore refused.

2. The interlocutory directions previously made remain case-management directions. Nothing in this judgment determines the disputed questions of ownership, beneficial entitlement, valuation, rental income, or the final distribution of assets. Those matters must be resolved on the admissible evidence at the substantive hearing.

3. The wife is entitled to the costs of this application, to be taxed if not agreed.

It is Ordered accordingly.

Dated the 2nd day of November, A.D. 2026

Justice C.V. Hope Strachan