

FIFTH DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL OF FLORIDA

Karen Haxel v. Douglas Haxel

Haxel · No. 5D2024-0846 · Decided January 16, 2026

SUMMARY

The Florida Fifth District Court of Appeal affirmed a dissolution judgment in part but reversed the \$13,980.33 credit awarded to the husband for post-separation mortgage payments. The court held that, because the husband had been primarily responsible for the mortgage during the marriage, he was not entitled to a credit for continuing those payments and remanded for an amended equitable distribution judgment.

OPINION

PER CURIAM.

FIFTH DISTRICT COURT OF APPEAL STATE OF FLORIDA
_____ Case No. 5D2024-0846 LT Case No. 2010-DR-014130
_____ KAREN HAXEL, Appellant, v. DOUGLAS HAXEL,
Appellee. _____ On appeal from the Circuit Court for Brevard
County, Michelle Pruitt Studstill, Judge. Alex Finch, of Finch Legal, PLLC, Longwood, for
Appellant.

Curtis N. Flajole, of Curtis N. Flajole, P.A., Rockledge, for Appellee. January 16, 2026 PER CURIAM. We affirm the dissolution judgment in all respects except one. Husband received a \$13,980.33 credit for payments that he made on the marital home after the parties’ final separation. But a court should not credit a spouse for making post-separation house payments when that spouse was the primary income earner generally responsible for paying the mortgage and other household expenses during the marriage.

See Cortese v. Cortese, 72 So. 3d 269, 269 (Fla. 5th DCA 2011); see, e.g., Kranz v. Kranz, 737 So. 2d 1198, 1202 (Fla. 5th DCA 1999) (concluding that a husband was not entitled to credit for paying the mortgage on the marital home after the parties separated “just as he had during the marriage”).

Here, because Husband paid the mortgage without Wife’s financial assistance during the marriage, the court should not have credited him for continuing those payments after Wife moved out of the house. Therefore, we reverse that aspect of the dissolution judgment and remand for the court to enter an amended judgment.

The amended judgment shall remove Husband's house payment credit and make the corresponding adjustment to the equitable distribution of the marital home. AFFIRMED in part; REVERSED in part; REMANDED with instructions. JAY, C.J., and WALLIS and HARRIS, JJ., concur. _____ Not final until disposition of any timely and authorized motion under Fla. R. App.

P. 9.330 or 9.331. _____ 2