

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.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Fifth District Court of Appeal of Florida
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Per Curiam; Jay, C.J.; Wallis, J.; Harris, J.
JURISDICTION	Florida Fifth District Court of Appeal
DECIDED	January 16, 2026
DOCKET	5D2024-0846
DISPOSITION	reversed_and_remanded
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Wife appealed a dissolution judgment, challenging Husband's credit for post-separation mortgage payments on the marital home.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published opinion
PARTIES	Karen Haxel v. Douglas Haxel

TOPICS

- equitable distribution
- dissolution of marriage
- family law procedure
- appellate procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

- family law
- dissolution of marriage
- equitable distribution
- appellate procedure

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

- Whether a spouse who was generally responsible for paying the mortgage and other household expenses during the marriage is entitled to a credit for post-separation mortgage payments on the marital home.

2. Whether the equitable distribution portion of the dissolution judgment should be adjusted to remove the house-payment credit.

HOLDINGS

1. A spouse should not receive a credit for post-separation mortgage payments when that spouse was the primary income earner and was generally responsible for paying the mortgage and other household expenses during the marriage.
2. The dissolution judgment must be amended to remove Husband's house-payment credit and make the corresponding adjustment to the equitable distribution of the marital home.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“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.”

“AFFIRMED in part; REVERSED in part; REMANDED with instructions.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

After the parties' final separation, Husband continued making mortgage payments on the marital home after Wife moved out. Husband had been the primary income earner and had paid the mortgage and other household expenses without Wife's financial assistance during the marriage. The trial court awarded Husband a \$13,980.33 credit for those post-separation payments.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Circuit Court for Brevard County entered a dissolution judgment awarding Husband a \$13,980.33 credit for payments he made on the marital home after the parties' final separation. The Fifth District Court of Appeal affirmed the judgment in all respects except the house-payment credit, reversed that portion, and remanded for entry of an amended judgment adjusting equitable distribution.

DISPOSITION

reversed_and_remanded

REMAND INSTRUCTIONS

Enter an amended judgment removing Husband's house-payment credit and making the corresponding adjustment to the equitable distribution of the marital home.

CASES CITED

- Cortese v. Cortese, 72 So. 3d 269, 269 (Fla. 5th DCA 2011)
- Kranz v. Kranz, 737 So. 2d 1198, 1202 (Fla. 5th DCA 1999)

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