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**WISCONSIN COURT OF APPEALS**

110 EAST MAIN STREET, SUITE 215

P.O. BOX 1688

MADISON, WISCONSIN 53701-1688

Telephone (608) 266-1880

TTY: (800) 947-3529

Facsimile (608) 267-0640

Web Site: [www.wicourts.gov](http://www.wicourts.gov)

**DISTRICT II**

October 1, 2025

To:

Hon. Teresa S. Basiliere  
Circuit Court Judge  
Electronic Notice

Cory A. Stang  
Electronic Notice

Desiree Bongers  
Clerk of Circuit Court  
Winnebago County Courthouse  
Electronic Notice

Sylvia Stang  
336 Bowen St  
Oshkosh, WI 54901

You are hereby notified that the Court has entered the following opinion and order:

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2024AP428

Cory A. Stang v. Sylvia Stang (L.C. #2022FA417)

Before Neubauer, P.J., Gundrum, and Lazar, JJ.

**Summary disposition orders may not be cited in any court of this state as precedent or authority, except for the limited purposes specified in WIS. STAT. RULE 809.23(3).**

Cory A. Stang, pro se, appeals from a judgment of divorce entered after a bench trial. Cory contends that the trial court erred in multiple respects and was biased. Based upon our review of the briefs and record, we conclude at conference that this case is appropriate for summary disposition. *See* WIS. STAT. RULE 809.21 (2023-24).<sup>1</sup> We affirm.

Cory filed a Petition for Divorce from Sylvia Stang in 2022. After various motions were filed and decided, a court trial was held on January 4, 2024. Cory appeals from the Findings of

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<sup>1</sup> All references to the Wisconsin Statutes are to the 2023-24 version.

Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Judgment of Divorce that the trial court signed on February 14, 2024.

Cory participated in the trial, pro se, and Sylvia was represented by counsel. Cory's appellate brief sets forth 26 complaints about matters ranging from pretrial motions to the judgment of divorce, discovery, and his contention that the trial judge was biased.

On appeal, Cory bears the burden of showing that the trial court's orders and judgment were erroneous. *See Gaethke v. Pozder*, 2017 WI App 38, ¶36, 376 Wis. 2d 448, 899 N.W.2d 381. His arguments fail to show error. They are undeveloped and lack citations to the record or supporting legal authority that show that the court's factual findings were clearly erroneous or that its decisions involved legal error or an erroneous exercise of discretion.

Though Wisconsin courts may liberally construe a pro se litigant's filings, *see West v. Macht*, 2000 WI App 134, ¶15 n.6, 237 Wis. 2d 265, 614 N.W.2d 34, pro se litigants "are bound by the same rules that apply to attorneys on appeal," *Waushara County v. Graf*, 166 Wis. 2d 442, 452, 480 N.W.2d 16 (1992). Cory's briefs violate several rules of appellate procedure that wholly undermine his ability to establish that the trial court erred.

First, Cory's principal and reply briefs lack the citations to the record required by the rules of appellate procedure to support the facts and documents he discusses. *See* WIS. STAT. RULE 809.19(1)(d) (requiring an appellant's brief to contain "a statement of facts relevant to the issues presented for review, with appropriate references to the record"). Such references are important because this court is bound by the record as it comes to us from the trial court and cannot consider documents or other items that are not included in the record. *See South Carolina Equip., Inc. v. Sheedy*, 120 Wis. 2d 119, 125-26, 353 N.W.2d 63 (Ct. App.

1984) (“An appellate court can only review matters of record in the trial court and cannot consider new matter attached to an appellate brief outside that record.”). Cory has failed to show that the documents and facts he discusses in his briefs are part of the record on appeal, and more to the point here, where in the record they are located. Providing these references is a party’s responsibility; this court is not required to search the record for support for legal arguments that are not accompanied by adequate citations to the record. *Roy v. St. Lukes Med. Ctr.*, 2007 WI App 218, ¶10 n.1, 305 Wis. 2d 658, 741 N.W.2d 256. On this basis alone, Cory’s appeal fails.

Furthermore, Cory does not cite any case law, statutes, or other legal authorities as support for any of his arguments. Again, it was his responsibility to do so, not this court’s. *See* WIS. STAT. RULE 809.19(1)(e) (requiring appellant’s brief to contain legal arguments with citations to supporting statutes and other legal authorities). “Arguments unsupported by references to legal authority will not be considered.” *State v. Pettit*, 171 Wis. 2d 627, 646, 492 N.W.2d 633 (Ct. App. 1992). Cory’s failure to develop any legal arguments to convince us of error in the trial court proceeding is yet another ground upon which his appeal fails. *See ABKA Ltd. P’ship v. Board of Rev.*, 231 Wis. 2d 328, 349 n.9, 603 N.W.2d 217 (1999) (“This court will not address undeveloped arguments.”); *Industrial Risk Insurers v. American Eng’g Testing, Inc.*, 2009 WI App 62, ¶25, 318 Wis. 2d 148, 769 N.W.2d 82 (“[W]e will not abandon our neutrality to develop arguments” for a party.).

Cory’s failure to provide any record citations also includes a failure to identify when and whether the issues he complains about were raised and argued in the trial court. Thus, he has failed to show that his challenges on appeal were not forfeited. *See Vollmer v. Luety*, 156 Wis. 2d 1, 10, 456 N.W.2d 797 (1990) (stating that forfeiture applies to an alleged error for

which no objection is raised and preserved in the trial court); *State v. Caban*, 210 Wis. 2d 597, 604, 563 N.W.2d 501 (1997). This rule

serves several important objectives. Raising issues at the trial court level allows the trial court to correct or avoid the alleged error in the first place, eliminating the need for appeal. It also gives both parties and the trial judge notice of the issue and a fair opportunity to address the objection. Furthermore, the waiver rule encourages attorneys to diligently prepare for and conduct trials. Finally, the rule prevents attorneys from “sandbagging” errors, or failing to object to an error for strategic reasons and later claiming that the error is grounds for reversal.

*State v. Huebner*, 2000 WI 59, ¶12, 235 Wis. 2d 486, 611 N.W.2d 727 (citations omitted). We see no basis to consider Cory’s challenges when he has failed to establish that they were not forfeited.

Additionally, Cory has failed to file a transcript of the full trial, or any other transcripts relating to pretrial proceedings. Again, he thus fails to point to any objection made during the course of the proceedings. Moreover, his complaints about the events during the trial and his arguments regarding the merits of his claims are wholly unsupported without a trial transcript or citation to any other evidence in the record. In the absence of a transcript, the court of appeals will assume that the record supports the facts essential to sustain the trial court’s decisions. *State v. Holmgren*, 229 Wis. 2d 358, 366, 599 N.W.2d 876 (Ct. App. 1999); *Suburban State Bank v. Squires*, 145 Wis. 2d 445, 451, 427 N.W.2d 393 (Ct. App. 1988).

It was Cory’s responsibility to provide this court with an adequate record from which to address the issues he seeks to raise on appeal. See *State v. Smith*, 55 Wis. 2d 451, 459, 198 N.W.2d 588 (1972). Because Cory has failed to show that he preserved the issues about which he now complains, provide any factual support from the record for his complaints, or to develop

his arguments with legal authority, he cannot meet his burden to show error. We reject Cory's challenges on appeal.

Therefore,

IT IS ORDERED that the judgment of the circuit court is summarily affirmed. *See* WIS. STAT. RULE 809.21.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that this summary disposition order will not be published.

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*Samuel A. Christensen*  
*Clerk of Court of Appeals*