## DISCIPLINARY REVIEW BOARD

## OF THE

## SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY

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RICHARD J. HUGHES JUSTICE COMPLEX P.O. BOX 962 TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0962

December 14, 2010

## CERTIFIED MAIL, R.R.R. & REGULAR MAIL

Paul L. Abramo, Esq. 93 Main Street P.O. Box 12 Newton, NJ 07860

> RE: <u>In the Matter of Paul L. Abramo</u> Docket No. DRB 10-292 District Docket No. X-2008-0002E LETTER OF ADMONITION

Dear Mr. Abramo:

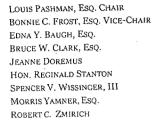
The Disciplinary Review Board has reviewed your conduct in the above matter and has concluded that it was improper. The Board denied your motion to dismiss the complaint and to supplement the record. Member Stanton recused himself.

Specifically, shortly before an October 2006 court hearing involving your client, Mark Peirano, you attempted to collect outstanding legal fees. When Peirano indicated that he would pay no more for the representation, you terminated the representation, without taking appropriate steps to protect Peirano's interests.

In addition you held his file "hostage," pending receipt of your fee. It is well-settled that attorneys must return client files upon termination of the representation, when requested by the client or subsequent counsel. The attorney may, however, retain a copy of the file for his/her own purposes, and charge the client for that copy. You failed to return Peirano's

JULIANNE K. DECORE CHIEF COUNSEL ISABEL FRANK DEPUTY CHIEF COUNSEL

ELLEN A. BRODSKY *FIRST ASSISTANT COUNSEL* LILLIAN LEWIN DONA S. SEROTA -TESCHNER COLIN T. TAMS KATHRYN ANNE WINTERLE *ASSISTANT COUNSEL* 



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complete file, forcing your client and his new attorney to do without it. Your misconduct in this regard violated <u>RPC</u> 1.16(d). The Board dismissed the remaining charges for lack of clear and convincing evidence: <u>RPC</u> 1.15(b); <u>RPC</u> 3.3(a)(1) and (5); <u>RPC</u> 3.4(c); and <u>RPC</u> 8.4(c) and (d).

In imposing only an admonition, the Board determined that your 2008 admonition for dissimilar conduct (improper letterhead) was not serious enough to warrant the imposition of greater discipline.

Your conduct adversely reflected not only upon you as an attorney but also upon all members of the bar. Accordingly, the Board has directed the issuance of this admonition to you. Rule 1:20-15(f)(4).

A permanent record of this occurrence has been filed with the Clerk of the Supreme Court and the Board's office. Should you become the subject of any further discipline, it will be taken into consideration.

The Board has also directed that the cost of the disciplinary proceedings be assessed against you. An invoice of costs will be forwarded under separate cover.

Very truly yours,

uliane K. De Core

Julianne K. DeCore Chief Counsel

JKD/sj

c: Chief Justice Stuart Rabner Associate Justices

Louis Pashman, Chair

Disciplinary Review Board

Mark Neary, Clerk

Supreme Court of New Jersey

Gail G. Haney, Deputy Clerk

Supreme Court of New Jersey (w/ethics history) Charles Centinaro, Director

Office of Attorney Ethics

Eric S. Solotoff, Chair, District XB Ethics Committee Caroline Record, Secretary, District XB Ethics Committee Mark Peirano, Grievant