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OF THE

SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY

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July 26, 2011

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL, R.R.R & REGULAR MAIL

Jonathan R. Lautman, Esquire
Kohn, Needle & Silverman
1763 Springfield Avenue
Maplewood, New Jersey 07040

RE: In the Matter of Jonathan R. Lautman
Docket No. DRB 11-107
District Docket No. VB-2010-007E
LETTER OF ADMONITION

Dear Mr. Lautman:

The Disciplinary Review Board reviewed your conduct in the above matter and has concluded that it was improper. Following a review of the record, the Board determined to impose an admonition.

Specifically, on July 16, 2007, you settled a personal injury case on behalf of your client, Diana Stevens, for \$25,000. Stevens accepted the terms of the settlement on the record and was informed that her medical bills, in the amount of \$4,700, would not be covered because of the dismissal of the PIP count of the complaint on summary judgment. You offered, however, to attempt to obtain a reduction of those bills, which you did. The bills were reduced to \$3,100.

On July 24, 2007, Stevens signed a release but, now dissatisfied with the terms of the settlement, refused to sign the accounting statement and told you not to issue the release. She instructed you to take no further action until you were advised otherwise or until you obtained better results. At a subsequent meeting with you, on August 6, 2007, she persisted in not signing the accounting statement and in not allowing you to issue the release. She also directed you not to communicate with her until the matter had been resolved to her satisfaction. Several communications from your firm to her, in 2009, were met with silence.

Nevertheless, your conduct in allowing the settlement to remain pending for three years constituted lack of diligence, a violation of RPC 1.3. Instead of promptly filing a motion for the enforcement of the settlement, the deposit of funds with the court, and the distribution of the funds, you did so only in 2010.

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. R. 1:20-15(f)(4).

In imposing only an admonition, the Board considered that no disciplinary infractions have been sustained against you since your 1987 admission to the New Jersey bar, that you have admitted your wrongdoing and expressed remorse therefor, that the terms of the settlement did not obligate you to negotiate a reduction of Stevens's medical bills, and that her instructions to you placed you in a nearly untenable position.

The Board dismissed the charges of gross neglect and lack of communication with the client as not having been clearly and convincingly supported by the evidence.

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 costs of the disciplinary proceedings be assessed against you. An invoice of costs will be forwarded under separate cover.

Very truly yours,



Julianne K. DeCore
Chief Counsel

JKD/paa

- 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
- Brian Gerstein, Chair
- District VB Ethics Committee
- Seth Ptasiewicz, Secretary
- District VB Ethics Committee
- Diana Stevens, Grievant