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SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY

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October 21, 1998

Certified Mail - R.R.R. and Regular Mail

Jeffrey M. Cohen, Esq.
2000 Morris Avenue
Union, New Jersey 07083

Re: In the Matter of Jeffrey M. Cohen
Docket No. DRB 98-248
LETTER OF ADMONITION

Dear Mr. Cohen:

The Disciplinary Review Board has reviewed your conduct in the above matter and has concluded that it was improper. Specifically, shortly after your admission to the New Jersey bar in 1988, while you were employed with a law firm, the firm was hired by Shari Fineman to represent her in a claim for monies allegedly due her from her employer, the Justamere Advertising Agency. In or about December 1988, the file was assigned to you. After numerous other Justamere employees agreed to join Ms. Fineman and retain the firm to handle their claims, you filed a seventy-two-count complaint in the Law Division on March 14, 1989. Thereafter, several events over which you had no control delayed the prosecution of the case for many years. Ultimately, a trial was scheduled for June 27, 1994. You wrote to the court to request an adjournment because you were, by then, a sole practitioner, and had to appear in a matter in another county. The request for adjournment was denied. When you did not attend the trial call, the complaint was dismissed without prejudice on June 28, 1994. Thereafter, you took no steps to reinstate the complaint and did not promptly advise your clients that the matter had been dismissed. Your failure to properly handle the June 27, 1994 calendar call and to file a motion to restore the complaint constituted lack of diligence and gross neglect, in violation of RPC 1.3 and RPC 1.1(a), respectively. In addition, your conduct violated RPC 1.4 when you failed to inform your clients that, because the defendants were judgment-proof, it would be futile and wasteful to continue with the lawsuit.

I/M/O Jeffrey M. Cohen
DRB 98-248


In imposing only an admonition, the Board considered that you were young and inexperienced when you started the representation in this matter and that, in any event, you would not have been able to collect monies from the responsible defendants, who were clearly judgment-proof. The Board also noted that you expressed contrition for your actions and that it is unlikely that you will behave in the same fashion again.

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).

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 affidavit of costs will be forwarded under separate cover.

Very truly yours,


Robyn M. Hill

RMH:ms

- c. Chief Justice Deborah T. Poritz
- Associate Justices
- Stephen W. Townsend, Clerk
- Supreme Court of New Jersey
- Lee M. Hymerling, Chair
- Disciplinary Review Board
- David E. Johnson, Jr., Director
- Office of Attorney Ethics.
- Mark D. Mohr, Chair
- District XII Ethics Committee
- Nicholas D. Caruso, Secretary
- District XII Ethics Committee
- James P. Snedeker, Grievant