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SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY



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June 21, 2002

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

William J. McDonnell, Esq.
110 North Broadway
South Amboy, NJ 08879

Re: In the Matter of William J. McDonnell
Docket No. DRB 02-131
LETTER OF ADMONITION

Dear Mr. McDonnell:

The Disciplinary Review Board has reviewed your conduct in the above matter and has concluded that it was improper. Specifically, in or about February 1995 you were retained to represent James Jackson in connection with various matters. For a two-year period you represented Mr. Jackson in those various proceedings and withdrew money from your trust account as fees for that representation. You also drew down on those funds on behalf of Mr. Jackson for certain legal fees payable to a law firm for a real estate matter. Throughout this period you did not provide Mr. Jackson with a written retainer agreement and did not apprise him of the specifics of the representation and/or the fees associated with the various matters. You also failed to submit to him billing records indicating the amount of the fees charged for the various proceedings. Your conduct was unethical and in violation of *RPC 1.5(b)* and *RPC 1.5*.

In imposing only an admonition, the Board considered that no disciplinary infractions have been sustained against you since your admission to the New Jersey bar in 1976.

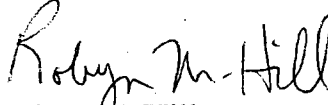
RPC 1.15

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
- Rocky L. Peterson, Chair, Disciplinary Review Board
- David E. Johnson, Jr., Director, Office of Attorney Ethics
- Craig Terkowitz, Chair, District VIII Ethics Committee
- Manny Gerstein, Secretary, District VIII Ethics Committee
- William Harth, Jr., Respondent's counsel
- James Jackson, Grievant