

# DISCIPLINARY REVIEW BOARD

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July 1, 2013

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

James Stevens, Esq.  
140 E. Ridgewood Avenue, Suite 415  
Paramus, New Jersey 07652

Re: **In the Matter of James Stevens**

Docket No. DRB 13-022

District Docket No. XIV-2010-0501E

**LETTER OF ADMONITION**

Dear Mr. Stevens:

The Disciplinary Review Board has 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, you were retained to handle an estate, which was valued at approximately \$650,000. By letter dated April 30, 2010, you advised the Office of Attorney Ethics (OAE) that you had distributed all of the estate funds remaining in your account. However, you continued to hold \$2,380.64 as of July 2010. You subsequently explained, during the DEC hearing that, in April 2010, you prepared the checks to disburse remaining estate assets. Before mailing the checks you realized that there was an outstanding check for \$1,875, issued in June 2007. Consequently, you did not send out the checks, believing that you had written them to the beneficiaries for incorrect amounts. After you learned that the outstanding check had in fact been cashed, you mailed the checks to the beneficiaries.

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At the DEC hearing, you acknowledged that you should have revised your letter to the OAE, before sending it, and that you should have been "more forthcoming." You never corrected the impression you had given to the OAE that all estate assets had been distributed. Your conduct was unethical and in violation of RPC 1.15(b) and RPC 8.4(c).

In imposing only an admonition, the Board considered that, during the time you handled the estate, you were beset by health and personal problems. Moreover, you were contrite and expressed remorse for your actions. Finally, you have no history of discipline since your admission to the bar, in 1979.

Your conduct has 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 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  
Bonnie Frost, Chair  
Disciplinary Review Board  
Mark Neary, Clerk  
Supreme Court of New Jersey

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Gail G. Haney, Deputy Clerk  
Supreme Court of New Jersey  
(w/ethics history)  
Charles Centinaro, Director  
Office of Attorney Ethics  
Kevin C. Corrison, Chair  
District IIA Ethics Committee  
Nina C. Remson, Secretary  
District IIA Ethics Committee