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April 21, 2020

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

George J. Cotz, Esq.
47 South Franklin Turnpike
Ramsey, New Jersey 07446
cotzlaw2@aol.com

Re: In the Matter of George J. Cotz
Docket No. DRB 19-424
District Docket No. XIV-2016-0380E
LETTER OF ADMONITION

Dear Mr. Cotz:

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 for your violation of RPC 5.5(a)(1) (practicing law while suspended).

Specifically, on March 24, 2005, the Court suspended you from the practice of law in New Jersey for six months. Subsequently, in September 2005, you filed a complaint in the United States District Court for the Southern District of New York (SDNY) in behalf of a client. You correctly anticipated that, as a measure of reciprocal discipline, New York would soon be imposing its own suspension. You, thus, determined to seek the pro hac vice admission of your wife, Lydia Cotz, Esq., to the SDNY, to assume the representation of the client. Both the client and Lydia agreed to this plan, in order to avoid delays in the ongoing litigation.

In January 2006, you prepared the pro hac vice motion and directed your secretary to obtain the requisite New Jersey Certificate of Good Standing for Lydia, and to file the motion with the SDNY. By the time your secretary filed the motion, however, you also had been suspended from the practice of law in New York. You admitted that you, thus, practiced law while suspended, in violation of RPC 5.5(a)(1).

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In imposing only an admonition, the Board considered that your misconduct was an unintentional, isolated incident. Moreover, the purpose of the pro hac vice motion at issue was to ensure your client suffered no interruption in the representation or the litigation pending in the SDNY. You also stipulated to your violation, demonstrating your willingness to take responsibility for your misconduct. Additionally, your practice of law while suspended was limited to the pro hac vice motion. Finally, the most compelling mitigating factor is the substantial passage of time – more than fourteen years – since your misconduct in this matter.

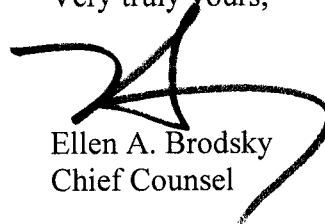
Your conduct has adversely reflected not only on you as an attorney but also on all members of the bar. Accordingly, the Board has directed the issuance of this admonition to you. R. 1:20-15(f)(4).

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, this admonition will be taken into consideration.

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

Very truly yours,

For: Ellen A. Brodsky



Ellen A. Brodsky
Chief Counsel

EAB/paa

c: Chief Justice Stuart Rabner
Associate Justices
Heather Joy Baker, Clerk
Supreme Court of New Jersey
Bruce W. Clark, Chair
Disciplinary Review Board (e-mail)
Gail G. Haney, Deputy Clerk
Supreme Court of New Jersey (w/ethics history)
Mary Catherine Cuff, P.J.A.D. (ret.), Special Master
Jason D. Saunders, First Assistant Ethics Counsel
Office of Attorney Ethics (interoffice mail and e-mail)
Stephen M. Orlofsky, Special Presenter