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January 22, 2021

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL, REGULAR MAIL, & E-MAIL

Christopher J. LaMonica, Esq.
44 Princeton Avenue
Brick, New Jersey 08724
chris@lamonicanjlaw.com

Re: In the Matter of Christopher J. LaMonica
Docket No. DRB 20-275
District Docket No. IIIA-2018-0002E
LETTER OF ADMONITION

Dear Mr. LaMonica:

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 1.3 (lack of diligence) and RPC 1.4(b) (failure to communicate with the client).

Specifically, you were the executor of the estate of Claire L. Modica, who died on March 9, 2016. Under the terms of Modica's last will and testament, grievant Carol L. Grisoni was to receive all of Modica's PSE&G stock.

On September 2, 2016, you informed Grisoni that you had verified Modica's possession of the stock and received a stock transfer package. Before the stock could be transferred to Grisoni, however, the New Jersey inheritance tax had to be paid. On November 16, 2016, Grisoni sent you \$1,658.66, which represented full payment of the required inheritance tax.

On January 18, 2017, Grisoni expressed frustration and concern that you had placed the matter on the "back burner." You admitted that you were "just moving too slow [sic] with the process." The next day, you confirmed to Grisoni the number of shares of PSE&G stock that she would receive and informed her that two uncashed dividend checks would be reissued in her name. You also stated that, if you could not locate the original stock certificates, a certificate would be re-issued, and you could proceed with the tax waiver and

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stock transfer, without waiting to hear from the other beneficiaries. You assured Grisoni that you would begin the process immediately, yet you did not pay the inheritance tax until February 13, 2017.

Eight months later, on October 13, 2017, in reply to another e-mail from Grisoni, you acknowledged that you had a responsibility to reply to her in a timely manner, conceded that you had not done so, and claimed that you had been “overcome with a number of matters in the office that [had] not allowed [you] to prioritize” Modica’s estate. On November 1, 2017, you informed Grisoni that you were overwhelmed and proceeding “too slowly due to overwork and time constraints.” Thereafter, you failed to take or return Grisoni’s telephone calls or to reply to her e-mails.

On November 30, 2017, you informed Grisoni that you planned to file the required paperwork with the Division of Taxation on December 6, 2017. Thereafter, you continued to ignore Grisoni’s telephone calls and e-mails. It was not until sometime in 2018 that you obtained the tax waiver and transferred the stock to Grisoni, who also received the dividend payments.

Your failure to finalize the stock transfer for approximately two years after Modica’s death was a violation of RPC 1.3. You also violated RPC 1.4(b) by failing to keep Grisoni apprised of the status of the matter and failed to communicate with her for sixteen months, a clear violation of RPC 1.4(b).

In imposing only an admonition, the Board considered your unblemished disciplinary record.

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,



Johanna Barba Jones
Chief Counsel

JBj/jm

c: See attached list

c: Chief Justice Stuart Rabner
Associate Justices
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Lauren Murray Dooley, Esq., Presenter (e-mail)
Carol Grisoni, Grievant (regular mail)