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**OF THE**  
**SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY**

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RICHARD J. HUGHES JUSTICE COMPLEX  
P.O. BOX 962  
TRENTON, NEW JERSEY 08625-0962  
(609) 815-2920

TIMOTHY M. ELLIS  
CHIEF COUNSEL  
NICOLE M. ACCHIONE  
FIRST ASSISTANT COUNSEL  
BARRY R. PETERSEN, JR.  
DEPUTY COUNSEL  
SALIMA ELIZABETH BURKE  
ADALINE KASER  
ASHLEY KOLATA-GUZZIK  
NICHOLAS LOGOTHETIS  
ALISA H. THATCHER  
ASSISTANT COUNSEL  
AMY MELISSA YOUNG  
ASSOCIATE COUNSEL

April 24, 2025

**VIA CERTIFIED, REGULAR, & ELECTRONIC MAIL**

Laurence R. Sheller, Esq.  
826 Alexander Road, Suite 104  
Princeton, New Jersey 08540  
laurence.sheller@gmail.com

**RE: In the Matter of Laurence R. Sheller**  
Docket No. DRB 25-042  
District Docket No. XIV-2024-0063E  
**CORRECTED LETTER OF ADMONITION**

Dear Mr. Sheller:

The Disciplinary Review Board (the Board) has reviewed the motion for discipline by consent (reprimand or such lesser discipline as the Board may deem appropriate) filed by the Office of Attorney Ethics (the OAE), pursuant to R. 1:20-10(b). Following a review of the record, the Board granted the motion and determined to impose an admonition for your violation of RPC 1.2(a) (failing to abide by the client's decisions concerning the scope and objectives of representation) and RPC 1.4(c) (failing to explain the matter to the client in a manner sufficient to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation).

Specifically, you represented Geita Johnson in a landlord-tenant action, for the purpose of evicting her tenants for their failure to pay rent. As revealed

by the investigation in this matter, Johnson apparently had “no intention of accepting a settlement.” Nevertheless, on the date set for trial, you appeared without Johnson, engaged in settlement negotiations with her tenants, and executed a settlement agreement, via a written Consent to Enter Judgment, which you then signed and assented to on Johnson’s behalf. You stipulated that you engaged in these settlement activities, both without Johnson’s authorization and consent and without informing her, prior to settlement, about any aspect of the settlement.

The Board found that you violated RPC 1.2(a) by negotiating and signing a settlement agreement, on Johnson’s behalf, without her prior authorization and consent. The Board further found that you violated RPC 1.4(c) by failing to inform Johnson, prior to your engagement in these settlement-related activities, about any aspect of the proposed settlement, including, but not limited to, the benefits and detriments of using settlement as a means of case resolution, the basis upon which you had determined settlement to be in Johnson’s best interests, the ongoing status and results of settlement negotiations, and the potential effects of settlement on Johnson’s rights, interests, and litigation objectives.

In imposing only an admonition, the Board weighed, in mitigation, your sincere expression of remorse and contrition for your wrongdoing in this matter, as well as your timely efforts to make Johnson whole and remediate the harm resulting from your misconduct. These efforts included your reimbursement of the legal fee that Johnson had paid for your services, your reimbursement of the rent payment that you had relinquished on her behalf at settlement, and your continued (and, apparently, pro bono) provision, to her, of legal services that were necessary to facilitate the timely removal of the nonpaying tenants from her property, consistent with the terms of settlement. The Board also found that your immediate reporting of your own misconduct, as well as your facilitation of Johnson’s filing of an ethics grievance against you, constituted significant mitigating factors which warranted a downward departure from the baseline discipline 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,

*/s/ Timothy M. Ellis*

Timothy M. Ellis  
Chief Counsel

TME/akg  
Enclosures

c: Chief Justice Stuart Rabner  
Associate Justices  
Heather Joy Baker, Clerk  
Supreme Court of New Jersey  
Hon. Mary Catherine Cuff, P.J.A.D. (Ret.), Chair  
Disciplinary Review Board (e-mail)  
Johanna Barba Jones, Director  
Office of Attorney Ethics (e-mail and interoffice mail)  
John J. Hays II, Deputy Ethics Counsel and Presenter  
Office of Attorney Ethics (e-mail)