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July 18, 2025

VIA CERTIFIED, REGULAR & ELECTRONIC MAIL

Christopher C. Roberts, Esq.
7 Glenwood Avenue, Suite 401
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chrisr1969@comcast.net

Re: In the Matter of Christopher C. Roberts
Docket No. DRB 25-126
District Docket No. VB-2024-0002E
LETTER OF ADMONITION

Dear Mr. Roberts:

The Disciplinary Review Board has reviewed the motion for discipline by consent (admonition or such lesser discipline as the Board deems appropriate) filed by the District VB Ethics Committee (the DEC) in the above matter, 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 1.3 (lacking diligence) and RPC 1.4(b) (failing to communicate with a client).

Specifically, on August 12, 2019, Vincent Green retained you to file a lawsuit against Bellwether Behavioral Health (Bellwether), a residential care facility that was providing care to Green's son, due to injuries Green's son sustained on October 18, 2018 at Bellwether.

On October 7, 2019, you filed a complaint against Bellwether; however, at that time, you were not aware that a court had appointed a receiver to wind down the facilities Bellwether operated. Indeed, due to the receivership, by order dated June 19, 2019, the court dismissed, without prejudice, all cases that were pending against Bellwether. The dismissal order permitted cases to be reinstated, by motion, if a plaintiff identified an appropriate and viable defendant and not the receiver and/or Bellwether. Green was aware of the June 18, 2019 dismissal order.

On October 19, 2019, you also became aware of the dismissal when counsel for the receiver contacted you and informed you of the June 19, 2019 order. You later spoke with Green and informed him that the order precluded his ability to bring suit against Bellwether. At some point, the court removed the receiver appointment and you informed Green that you were having difficulty locating the appropriate party to serve because your understanding was that Bellwether had dissolved as a company.

From the time Green retained you, in August 2019, through January 2022, you handled the matter, addressed open issues, and communicated with Green about aspects of the case. However, from January 2022 through May 2024, you failed to return Green's telephone calls. Additionally, when Green visited your office to speak with you about the case, you were never there. Conversely, you claimed to have been unaware of any telephone messages Green may have left for you during January 2022 through May 2024, but acknowledged you made no proactive attempts to communicate with Green about the case, maintaining that, due to issues with serving the defendants and the receivership, there were no updates to communicate to Green.

On March 13, 2024, Green filed an ethics grievance against you. On April 23, 2024, you filed a motion to reinstate Green's matter, which the court denied, without prejudice, on May 10, 2024. The order allowed you to refile the motion to reinstate, provided you complied with R. 1:13-7(a).¹

¹ R. 1:13-7(a) permits a court to dismiss a matter, without prejudice, for lack of prosecution. The Rule also provides a path for a party to reinstate their matter. According to publicly available court records, there has been no activity in Green's case since the court's May 10, 2024 order.

By letter dated May 2, 2024, you advised the DEC investigator that you filed a motion to reinstate Green's matter and believed it would be granted because Bellwether no longer existed. Nevertheless, if the court denied the motion, you explained you had an alternate strategy involving service on a substituted party, which would require a subsequent motion. You expressed that, because Green indicated that no attorney would take on his matter, he was willing to continue the representation, "especially since [he was] the one who filed it, kept the Receiver and the Court aware and at least have a strategy to implement regarding substituting the party."

Based on the foregoing facts, you stipulated that you had violated (1) RPC 1.3 by failing to file a motion to reinstate Green's case until early 2024, approximately four years after the court dismissed the matter, without prejudice, and (2) RPC 1.4 by failing to communicate with Green about the case from January 2022 through May 2024.

In mitigation, you have no disciplinary history in thirty years of practice; took remedial measures upon learning of Green's ethics grievance; admitted to your wrongdoing; and Green would like you to continue to represent him until the conclusion of the case.

The Board did not find any aggravating factors.

In imposing only an admonition, the Board accorded considerable mitigating weight to the remedial steps you took to reinstate Green's matter; that Green is willing to continue with your representation; that you admitted your misconduct, thereby conserving disciplinary resources; and that you have no formal discipline in thirty years at the bar.

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 cost 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

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