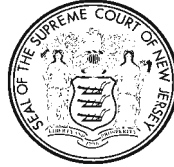


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June 25, 2026

Heather Joy Baker, Clerk
Supreme Court of New Jersey
P.O. Box 970
Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0962

Re: **In the Matter of Harry Furman**
Docket No. DRB 26-151
District Docket No. I-2025-0015E

Dear Ms. Baker:

The Disciplinary Review Board (the Board) has reviewed the motion for discipline by consent (reprimand or such lesser discipline as the Board deems appropriate) filed by the District I 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 that a reprimand is the appropriate quantum of discipline for respondent's violation of RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence) and RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information).

The stipulated facts are as follows. Linda Champion first met respondent before he became a lawyer. Additionally, approximately twenty years ago, she retained him in an employment matter. More recently, in August 2019, Champion retained respondent to prepare her last will and testament (the Will).

Nearly six years later, in March 2025, Champion reviewed the Will for the first time. Her father recently had passed away and she wanted to ensure her own estate was in proper order.

Upon reviewing the Will, Champion observed that the first name of her executrix was incorrect, but the last name was correct. Therefore, she contacted respondent by telephone about the error. Respondent advised Champion to return to his office. When Champion arrived, she provided an employee who answered the door with the Will. The employee told Champion that respondent was in a meeting, but that she would provide him with the Will and contact Champion when it was corrected.

Near the end of March 2025, Champion appeared in person at respondent's office seeking her corrected will. Respondent told her it was not yet ready and that it had "not been incinerated." For the next five months, Champion repeatedly contacted respondent and visited his office seeking the return of her corrected will. During one of the occasions Champion visited respondent's office in person, he told her to contact him by telephone the following day; she contacted him but never received a return telephone call. On another occasion when she visited respondent's office seeking the return of the Will, he told her it was "not missing" but that it "may be at the college."¹

Champion, who was seventy-eight years old at the time, explained that her unsuccessful attempts to receive a corrected will caused her stress and anxiety. She believed that respondent's refusal to return the Will was a "theft of her personal property," and she felt that respondent had "scammed" her. Therefore, she felt she had no choice but to file an ethics grievance against him.

After the DEC began its investigation, respondent contacted Champion to inform her that "his secretary was available to take the [W]ill" to her. Champion assumed respondent meant that his secretary would bring the Will to her home but, when she contacted respondent for clarification, he told Champion his secretary would meet her in his office parking lot.

¹ At the time, respondent was an adjunct professor at a New Jersey university.

Accordingly, on August 21, 2025, Champion made arrangements to meet respondent's secretary at the front door of the building. When she arrived, respondent's accountant, not secretary, provided Champion with an envelope containing her corrected will. The document Champion received from respondent was her original 2019 will, with a replacement page that set forth her executrix's correct first name. Respondent asserted that, because the first page of the Will contained only a spelling error of the executrix's first name, the error did not change the content of Champion's instrument. Thus, he asserted that he did not need to create an entirely new will. Nevertheless, respondent recognized that "different circumstances" would have required new signatures on the Will.

Based on the foregoing facts, the parties stipulated that respondent violated RPC 1.3 by failing to correct Champion's will in a timely manner and RPC 1.4(b) by failing to communicate with her or to reply to her requests for information.

In mitigation, the parties asserted that early 2025 was an extraordinarily difficult time for respondent and his family. He and his wife were diagnosed with serious medical conditions that required a substantial amount of care. For example, respondent was responsible for transporting his wife to her weekly chemotherapy appointments. Moreover, in late 2024, respondent's adult daughter suffered a stroke, which paralyzed the right side of her body and left her unable to speak. Although her condition has improved, respondent transports her to speech, physical, and occupational therapy appointments. Respondent asserted that he advised Champion of his family's medical problems when he agreed to correct the Will.

Also in mitigation, respondent described that his law practice also underwent substantial changes following the 2022 death of one of his partners, and the semi-retirement of another partner. Finally, he accepted responsibility for his failure to promptly provide Champion with a corrected will.

In aggravation, the parties noted that respondent previously received an admonition for similar misconduct.

To support the recommendation that respondent's misconduct warranted a reprimand, the parties asserted that, absent serious aggravating factors, such as harm to the client, conduct involving gross neglect, lack of diligence, and failure to communicate ordinarily results in an admonition, even when accompanied by other non-serious ethics infractions.

The parties, thus, contended that, due to the aggravating and mitigating factors present in this case, a reprimand was appropriate because, although he failed to communicate with Champion and delayed correcting her will, his misconduct did not cause Champion legal harm. However, the parties acknowledged that respondent's misconduct caused Champion emotional distress and anxiety.

The Board concluded that, after he incorrectly identified the first name of Champion's executrix when he prepared Champion's 2019 will, when she asked him to correct her the first name in the Will, respondent failed to make the correction in a timely manner, in violation of RPC 1.3. Worse, respondent ignored Champion's multiple attempts, both telephonically and in person, over a five-month period, to secure a corrected will, in violation of RPC 1.4(b).

Generally, an admonition is the appropriate form of discipline for an attorney's failure to communicate with a client, even when accompanied by other, non-serious ethics infractions. See In the Matter of Hayes R. Young, DRB 23-215 (November 22, 2023) (in a medical malpractice matter, the attorney filed the client's complaint without the required affidavit of merit; seven months later, the court dismissed the matter for lack of prosecution; during the span of several months, the attorney failed to reply to the client's numerous inquiries about the status of her case and failed to inform her that her lawsuit had been filed and, thereafter, dismissed; the attorney also failed to set forth to the client, in writing, the basis or rate of the legal fee; violations of RPC 1.3, RPC 1.4(b), and RPC 1.5(b); in imposing only an admonition, the Board weighed, in mitigation, the attorney's lack of disciplinary history, admission of wrongdoing, contrition, and cooperation with disciplinary authorities, as well as attenuating circumstances related to the illness and death of his spouse), and In the Matter of Christopher J. LaMonica, DRB 20-275 (January 22, 2021) (the attorney promised to take action to remit his client's payment toward an owed inheritance tax; despite the attorney's assurances that he would act, he failed to remit the payment until two years later; in addition, the attorney failed to keep his client apprised of the status of her matter and failed to communicate with her for sixteen months;

violations of RPC 1.3 and RPC 1.4(b); in imposing only an admonition, the Board weighed the attorney's unblemished disciplinary record).

Thus, the Board concluded that the baseline discipline for respondent's misconduct is an admonition. However, to craft the appropriate discipline in this case, it considered both aggravating and mitigating factors.

Here, in aggravation, just one year before he needlessly delayed correcting Champion's 2019 will, respondent received an admonition for similarly lacking diligence in an estate matter and failing to communicate with his clients. The Court has signaled an inclination toward progressive discipline and the stern treatment of repeat offenders. In such scenarios, enhanced discipline is appropriate. See In re Kantor, 180 N.J. 226 (2004) (disbarment for abandonment of clients and repeated failure to cooperate with the disciplinary system). Thus, the Board accorded this aggravating factor significant weight, particularly because the only correction Champion required was to revise the first name of her executrix. Respondent's inexplicable delay also caused Champion psychological distress, which the Board accorded some weight.

In mitigation, respondent's personal life at the time he mishandled Champion's matter was complex. He was suffering from his own medical condition at the same time he was responsible for transporting his wife and daughter to their medical appointments. Moreover, he finally corrected Champion's will and entered into this motion for discipline by consent, thereby accepting responsibility for his misconduct and conserving disciplinary resources.

On balance, the Board determined that a reprimand is the appropriate quantum of discipline to protect the public and preserve confidence in the bar.

Enclosed are the following documents:

1. Notice of motion for discipline by consent, dated March 12, 2026.
2. Stipulation of discipline by consent, dated April 22, 2026.

3. Affidavit of consent, dated April 9, 2026.
4. Ethics history, dated June 25, 2026.

Very truly yours,

/s/ Timothy M. Ellis

Timothy M. Ellis
Chief Counsel

TME/knd
Enclosures

- c: (w/o enclosures)
- 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)
 - Ryan J. Moriarty, Deputy First Assistant
 - Office of Attorney Ethics (e-mail)
 - Scott Sherwood, Chair
 - District I Ethics Committee (e-mail)
 - Dorothy F. McCrosson, Esq., Secretary
 - District I Ethics Committee (e-mail and regular mail)
 - Michelle D. Maguire, Presenter
 - District I Ethics Committee (e-mail)
 - Harry Furman, Respondent (e-mail and regular mail)
 - Linda Champion, Grievant (regular mail)