

PRESS RELEASE

From: David A. White
Chief Disciplinary Counsel

Date: November 9, 2023

Re: **Delaware Supreme Court Orders Immediate Disbarment of Delaware Lawyer**

On November 9, 2023, the Delaware Supreme Court (the “Court”) ordered the immediate disbarment of Delaware lawyer, Richard L. Abbott (“Abbott”), for professional misconduct involving his conduct and statements made to the Court of Chancery during litigation proceedings in that court and for his conduct and statements made in the course of the disciplinary case. The Court also ordered Abbott to pay the costs of the disciplinary proceeding and ordered the Office of Disciplinary Counsel to file a Petition in the Court of Chancery for the appointment of a Receiver of Abbott’s law practice.

The Court found Abbott’s misconduct violated the following Delaware Lawyers’ Rules of Professional Conduct (the “Rules”) by clear and convincing evidence:

Rule 3.4(c), which provides a lawyer shall not: “knowingly disobey an obligation under the rules of a tribunal except for an open refusal based on an assertion that no valid obligation exists.”

Rule 3.5(d), which provides a lawyer shall not: “engage in conduct intended to disrupt a tribunal or engage in undignified or discourteous conduct that is degrading to a tribunal.”

Rule 8.4(a), which provides it is misconduct for a Delaware lawyer to “violate or attempt to violate the Rules of Professional Conduct [or] knowingly assist or induce another to do so.”

Rule 8.4(c), which provides it is misconduct for a Delaware lawyer to “engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation.”

Rule 8.4(d) which provides it is professional misconduct for a Delaware lawyer to “engage in conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice.”

In February 2020 ODC filed a Petition for Discipline against Abbott alleging his conduct violated the above-referenced Rules (the “Disciplinary Case”). On July 1, 2020 Abbott filed his Answer to the Petition.

A 7-day disciplinary hearing was held before a panel of the Board on Professional Responsibility (the “Board”) in November 2021 and a 1-day sanctions hearing before the Board was held on August 24, 2022.

Following post-hearing briefing by Abbott and the Office of Disciplinary Counsel, the Delaware Supreme Court found Abbott violated the above-referenced Rules and immediately disbarred him.

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