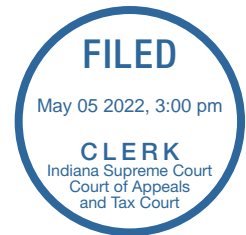


In the Indiana Supreme Court

In the Matter of: Steven A. Johnson,
Respondent

Supreme Court Case No.
21S-DI-211



Published Order Approving Statement of Circumstances and Conditional Agreement for Discipline

Pursuant to Indiana Admission and Discipline Rule 23(12.1)(b), the Indiana Supreme Court Disciplinary Commission and Respondent have submitted for approval a “Statement of Circumstances and Conditional Agreement for Discipline” stipulating agreed facts and proposed discipline as summarized below.

Stipulated Facts: Respondent and his son Arthur Johnson (“Arthur”), both partners in their firm at the time, represented a transportation company (“Client”) in two separate matters—a breach of contract action and a labor dispute. Client’s CEO, Danette Garza, was Client’s sole point of contact with the firm. Respondent led Garza to believe that Respondent would have primary responsibility for the two matters and that Arthur would assist him.

After some initial activity in the breach of contract action, Respondent delegated all internal responsibility to Arthur and paid the matter no further attention. Arthur, in turn, wholly neglected the matter, which resulted in a series of adverse rulings. Arthur was largely nonresponsive to Garza’s inquiries and, when he did respond, misrepresented the status of the case. Respondent also was nonresponsive to Garza’s inquiries. Due to the neglect of Respondent and Arthur, the breach of contract action resulted in two five-figure sanction awards and a default judgment of approximately \$1.8 million against Client. Client first learned of all of this when its bank account was seized during garnishment proceedings. Successor counsel later appeared for Client and moved to set aside the default judgment based on the neglect of Respondent and Arthur.

A similar sequence of events played out in the labor dispute. Respondent internally delegated the matter to Arthur without informing Garza, Arthur proceeded to wholly neglect the matter, and both Respondent and Arthur were largely nonresponsive to Garza’s inquiries. Respondent knew of Arthur’s failure to timely file an answer, noncompliance with discovery, and a resulting order to show cause; yet Respondent did not increase his attention to the case or take any remedial steps. Successor counsel appeared for Client at the show cause hearing and thereafter worked to comply with the pending discovery orders, and Respondent subsequently withdrew his appearance.

Violations: The parties agree that Respondent violated these Indiana Professional Conduct Rules prohibiting the following misconduct:

1.3: Failing to act with reasonable diligence and promptness.

1.4(a)(3): Failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter.

1.4(a)(4): Failing to comply promptly with a client's reasonable requests for information.

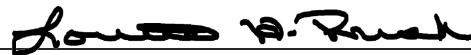
1.4(b): Failing to explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit a client to make informed decisions.

Discipline: The parties propose the appropriate discipline is a 30-day suspension with automatic reinstatement. The Court, having considered the submissions of the parties, now approves the agreed discipline.

For Respondent's professional misconduct, the Court **suspends Respondent from the practice of law for a period of 30 days, beginning June 20, 2022.** Respondent shall not undertake any new legal matters between service of this order and the effective date of the suspension, and Respondent shall fulfill all the duties of a suspended attorney under Admission and Discipline Rule 23(26). At the conclusion of the period of suspension, provided there are no other suspensions then in effect, Respondent shall be automatically reinstated to the practice of law, subject to the conditions of Admission and Discipline Rule 23(18)(a).

The costs of this proceeding are assessed against Respondent. With the acceptance of this agreement, the hearing officer appointed in this case is discharged with the Court's appreciation.

Done at Indianapolis, Indiana, on 5/5/2022.



Loretta H. Rush
Chief Justice of Indiana

All Justices concur.