



BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
of the
SUPREME COURT OF TENNESSEE

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RELEASE OF INFORMATION
RE: JOE W. ELLIS, BPR # 17967
CONTACT: CHARLES A. HIGH
BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
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May 13, 2003

NASHVILLE LAWYER DISCIPLINED AND PLACED ON PROBATION

Joe W. Ellis, III, a Nashville attorney, has been publicly disciplined by Order of the Supreme Court of Tennessee entered on April 29, 2003. The disciplinary action was based on a conditional guilty plea submitted by Ellis. The plea was recommended and approved by the Board of Professional Responsibility.

The order imposes a suspension of eleven months, twenty-nine days, commencing February 9, 2001, the date upon which Ellis voluntarily ceased the practice of law. A suspension of less than one year does not require a formal reinstatement hearing and the effect of the Court's order is to reinstate Ellis' license to practice and to begin a two (2) year probation.

Mr. Ellis was placed on probation for two (2) years commencing April 29, 2003. During the probationary period Ellis is required to fully comply with a monitoring/advocacy agreement with the Tennessee Lawyers Assistance Program (TLAP). The agreement requires that the lawyer shall remain in treatment with his medical doctor and to take the medication prescribed by the doctor. The agreement requires random substance and alcohol tests as well as abstinence from the use of alcohol or controlled substances not prescribed by the doctor.

The conditional guilty plea stated that Ellis had engaged in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice and in conduct adversely reflecting on his fitness to practice law. The petition for discipline charged that Ellis had billed time entries to client files for work not performed by him. It was also charged that he had made a false statement to a judge in connection with one time entry.

Ellis' misconduct was mitigated by the fact that he had no prior discipline, by his full and free disclosure to the Board of the misconduct, and by the fact that he sought treatment for a medical condition that was previously not diagnosed.

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The disciplinary rules are mandatory for all attorneys. They state a minimum level of conduct and any violation reflects negatively on the standing and integrity of the bar.

CAH:mw

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