



BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
of the
SUPREME COURT OF TENNESSEE

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RELEASE OF INFORMATION
RE: TARA ELENA BAZZONE, BPR #18537
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BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
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February 26, 2003

TUPELO, MISSISSIPPI FORMER MEMPHIS LAWYER SUSPENDED FROM
PRACTICE OF LAW

The law license of Tara Elena Bazzone, formerly of Memphis, has been suspended for a period of one year by Order of the Tennessee Supreme Court entered on February 20, 2003. Ms. Bazzone's suspension resulted from her own self-report and from a complaint lodged against her by attorneys of her former law firm. A Petition for Discipline was filed against Bazzone in October of 2002. In December of 2002, Bazzone submitted a Conditional Guilty Plea to the petition in exchange for a one-year suspension.

The Board found that Bazzone had committed several fraudulent acts between 2000 and 2001 regarding her handling of certain estate planning matters on behalf of a client. In November 2000, Ms. Bazzone improperly back-dated the date of execution of a client's will and a revocable trust and signed a false affidavit attesting that she had witnessed the execution of this client's will. In March of 2001, Ms. Bazzone prepared fraudulent letters testamentary setting forth that she and both of the client's daughters acted jointly as co-executrix in the client's probate estate after the client's death in February 2001, where no petition to admit the client's Last Will and Testament had been filed yet with the Shelby County Probate Court. Finally, Ms. Bazzone provided false statements to the Shelby County Probate Judge to the effect that the Client's will was properly executed in order to have the will admitted to probate in mid-April of 2001.

The Board and the Court found the following as mitigating factors: a) her self-report and full admission of the misconduct; b) her remorse; c) her lack of any prior disciplinary history; d) the emotional distress she experienced during the winter of 2000 and spring of 2001, given the loss of her job at the law firm; and e) the fact that the fraud caused no loss to the heirs of the estate (the heirs receiving exactly what they were entitled to had the will been properly witnessed).

The Tennessee Supreme Court further ordered that Ms. Bazzone pay the costs of the disciplinary proceedings.

Ms. Bazzone can be reinstated to the practice of law in Tennessee at the expiration of the one-year period only upon filing a Petition for Reinstatement as required in Section 19 of Supreme Court Rule 9, and only upon her production of clear and convincing evidence that she should be reinstated to the practice of law.

JDJ:mw

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