



BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
of the
SUPREME COURT OF TENNESSEE

LANCE B. BRACY
CHIEF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL

LAURA L. CHASTAIN
DEPUTY CHIEF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL

BEVERLY P. SHARPE
CONSUMER COUNSEL DIRECTOR

1101 KERMIT DRIVE, SUITE 730
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37217
TELEPHONE: (615) 361-7500
(800) 486-5714
FAX: (615) 367-2480
E-MAIL: ethics@tbor.org

WILLIAM W. HUNT, III
CHARLES A. HIGH
SANDY GARRETT
JESSE D. JOSEPH
JAMES A. VICK
THERESA M. COSTONIS
DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL

RELEASE OF INFORMATION
RE: MICHAEL A. BELZ, BPR #17251
CONTACT: JESSE D. JOSEPH
BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY

January 30, 2004

MEMPHIS LAWYER SUSPENDED

By Order of the Tennessee Supreme Court filed January 28, 2004, Michael A. Belz, of Memphis, was suspended from the practice of law for one year effective November 17, 2003. Belz had previously been temporarily suspended from the practice of law on February 20, 2002 for failure to respond to a complaint of misconduct.

A Petition for Discipline was filed by the Board of Professional Responsibility against Mr. Belz on August 13, 2002 alleging that Mr. Belz failed to properly and timely appear and represent his clients. When Belz failed to respond to the petition, a Motion for Default Judgment was filed and granted against him on July 18, 2003.

A hearing on the Petition for Discipline as to disciplinary sanction was conducted before a Hearing Panel of the Board on October 29, 2003. Mr. Belz appeared and testified as to mitigating factors. The Hearing Panel in its November 17, 2003 Judgment found that Belz violated the Code of Professional Responsibility in that he neglected legal matters entrusted to him by a client, failed to represent the client with reasonable diligence and promptness and to keep this client reasonably informed about the status of his case to the extent necessary to make informed decisions, and failed to comply with Rules of the Supreme Court or cooperate with the Board or with Disciplinary Counsel regarding this complaint of misconduct.

The Hearing Panel found that Mr. Belz should be suspended from the practice of law for one year effective November 17, 2003, and placed conditions upon Mr. Belz' reinstatement.

The suspension will remain in effect until an Order of Reinstatement, if any, is issued by the Tennessee Supreme Court. Reinstatement would be granted only if Mr. Belz demonstrates by clear and convincing evidence that he has the moral qualifications, competency, and learning required for admission to the practice of law and that his resumption of practice would not be detrimental to the integrity and standing of the bar or administration of justice or subversive to the public interest.

The order requires Mr. Belz to pay the costs of the disciplinary proceeding as a condition to being reinstated to the practice of law.

JDJ:mw