



**BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
OF THE
SUPREME COURT OF TENNESSEE**

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

RELEASE OF INFORMATION
KEITH BLACK, BPR # 18546
CONTACT: PRESTON SHIPP
BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
615-361-7500

May 5, 2009

HAMILTON COUNTY LAWYER CENSURED

On May 5, 2009, Keith Black, who practices law in Tennessee, received a Public Censure from the Board of Professional Responsibility of the Tennessee Supreme Court.

The Respondent represented the Complainant's grandson in a criminal case in which the grandson was ultimately convicted of attempted voluntary manslaughter. The Complainant's grandson was also the defendant in a civil case arising from the same incident. The Complainant and her grandson thought that the Respondent would represent the grandson in the civil, as well as the criminal matter. When the Respondent learned that the 30-day time period for filing an answer in the civil case was about to expire, the Respondent drafted, signed, and filed an answer to the complaint. After filing the answer, the Respondent had no more involvement in the civil case. The sentencing hearing in the criminal case was conducted on the same day as the initial hearing in the civil case. When the sentencing hearing was over, the Complainant and her grandson were ready to go to the civil hearing, but the Respondent would not go with them. The judge in the civil case and the Complainant tried to contact the Respondent for about two hours, but the Respondent was in court on other cases. In the Respondent's absence, the trial judge entered a default judgment for two million dollars against the Complainant's grandson. Ultimately, the Complainant and her grandson retained another attorney, who had the default judgment set aside, and the case was reset for trial.

A Public Censure is a rebuke and warning to the attorney, but it does not affect the attorney's ability to practice law.

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