



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

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RELEASE OF INFORMATION
RE: JOSEPH H. CRABTREE, JR., BPR #011451
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BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
615-361-7500

November 22, 2022

McMINN COUNTY LAWYER SUSPENDED

On November 22, 2022, the Supreme Court of Tennessee entered an order suspending Joseph H. Crabtree, Jr., immediately from the practice of law in Tennessee for a period of three (3) years, with one (1) year served on active suspension and the remaining two (2) years on probation. For the first year of probation, he must engage a practice monitor at his own expense. As conditions of reinstatement, he must complete six (6) hours of Continuing Legal Education on ethics and six (6) hours on law office management, in addition to the normal annual CLE requirements, pay restitution to two (2) former clients, and reimburse the Tennessee Lawyers Fund for Client Protection for any funds that it may pay to the complainants.

The Supreme Court found that Mr. Crabtree failed to correct erroneous advice he had given to a client and allowed the statute of limitations to expire on the client's claim and failed to advise the same client to seek independent legal advice before negotiating and completing a settlement of the client's legal malpractice claim. In other cases, he failed to communicate with clients, failed to perform work that he was hired to do, failed to distribute settlement proceeds after depositing them into his trust account, failed to respond to court orders resulting in his clients becoming liable for attorney's fees, and failed over an extended period of time to communicate with clients or keep them informed about their cases. In addition, he failed to file a personal injury suit before the statute of limitations expired, failed to respond to disciplinary counsel's request for information, and failed to repay attorney's fees received for work never performed.

The Supreme Court found Mr. Crabtree's conduct violated Tennessee Rules of Professional Conduct 1.1 (competence), 1.3 (diligence), 1.4 (communication), 1.8 (h) (conflict of interest), 3.2 (expediting litigation), 3.4 (c) (fairness to opposing party and counsel), 8.1 (b) (disciplinary matters), and 8.4 (a), (c), and (d) (misconduct).

Pursuant to Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 9, Section 28.1, the suspension is effective upon entry of the order by the Court. Mr. Crabtree must comply with the requirements of Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 9, Sections 28 and 30.4, regarding the obligations and responsibilities of suspended attorneys and the procedure for reinstatement.

Crabtree 2970-3 rel.doc