



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

10 CADILLAC DRIVE, SUITE 220  
BRENTWOOD, TENNESSEE 37027  
TELEPHONE: (615) 361-7500  
(800) 486-5714  
Website: [www.tbpr.org](http://www.tbpr.org)

**RELEASE OF INFORMATION**  
**RE: J. RUSSELL HELDMAN, BPR #009989**  
**CONTACT: EILEEN BURKHALTER SMITH**  
**BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**  
**615-361-7500**

January 19, 2023

**WILLIAMSON COUNTY LAWYER CENSURED**

On January 19, 2023, J. Russell Heldman, an attorney licensed to practice law in Tennessee, received a Public Censure from the Board of Professional Responsibility of the Tennessee Supreme Court.

Mr. Heldman represented a client in a contentious divorce. He filed two motions to recuse the trial judge, both of which were denied. Meanwhile, the opposing party was awarded attorney fees by order in April 2018. Thereafter, funds were paid into court from the sale of a piece of marital property. The opposing party filed a motion to disburse the funds held by the court to satisfy the award of attorney fees. Mr. Heldman opposed this motion. The court orally granted the opposing party's motion to disburse the funds, and the court ordered opposing counsel to prepare an order. After the motion had been orally granted, but before the order was entered, Mr. Heldman filed a third motion to recuse the trial judge. The motion included arguments that had not been raised in the trial court and arguments that addressed issues previously raised in the earlier motions for recusal. The court of appeals denied the third motion to recuse and held that the motion was frivolous.

By the aforementioned acts, Mr. Heldman violated Rule of Professional Conduct 3.1 (meritorious claims and contentions, 3.4 (fairness to opposing party), and 8.4(d) (prejudice to the administration of justice) and is hereby Publicly Censured for these violations.

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

Heldman 69011-6 rel.doc