



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

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**RELEASE OF INFORMATION**  
**RE: JOE RICHARD JUDKINS, BPR NO. 005548**  
**CONTACT: ERIC ANDREW FULLER**  
**BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**  
**615-361-7500**

November 15, 2022

**ANDERSON COUNTY LAWYER CENSURED**

On November 15, 2022, Joe Richard Judkins, an attorney licensed to practice law in Tennessee, received a Public Censure from the Supreme Court of Tennessee and was ordered to pay the costs and fees of the Board of Professional Responsibility.

Mr. Judkins represented a client in a divorce action. Following a disagreement between attorney and client, Mr. Judkins' client discharged him and retained new counsel. Mr. Judkins refused to immediately transfer the client file to his client's new counsel and asserted an attorney's lien in the litigation and over the file materials, pursuant to Tennessee common law and Tennessee Code Annotated § 23-2-102, for the purpose of securing the payment of his fees and the reimbursement of his expenses for his service as counsel. While the assertion of these lien rights was lawful, Mr. Judkins' delay in transferring certain client file materials violated his duties to his former client under Rule of Professional Conduct 1.16(d) (terminating representation).

Mr. Judkins additionally failed to adequately communicate with his client about the terms of the fees to be paid or the manner in which such fees would be paid, failed to provide updates as to the accrual of fees at regular intervals during the representation, and did not notify his client as to the amount of fees owed until after his representation was terminated, in violation of Rule of Professional Conduct 1.4 (communication)

Finally, in an attempt to assert and defend his valid attorney's lien for fees, Mr. Judkins sought and received permission from the Court to intervene in the litigation. Following his intervention, he attempted to participate in the litigation beyond the extent the Court deemed was necessary to assert and defend his lien rights, in violation of Rules of Professional Conduct 8.4(a) and (d) (misconduct).

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