



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

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RELEASE OF INFORMATION
RE: JOSEPH BRENT NOLAN, BPR #15237
CONTACT: WILLIAM C. MOODY
BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
615-361-7500

December 1, 2014

KNOX COUNTY LAWYER SUSPENDED

On November 26, 2014, Joseph Brent Nolan, of Knoxville, Tennessee, was suspended from the practice of law by Order of the Tennessee Supreme Court for two (2) years or indefinitely until restitution is completed. The effective date of the Order is December 6, 2014. Mr. Nolan must pay restitution to three (3) clients in the total amount of \$69,599.54. If restitution is completed during the first year of the suspension, the second year may be served on probation. If restitution is completed during the second year of the suspension, the remainder of the second year may be served on probation. Mr. Nolan must pay the Board's costs and expenses and the court costs within ninety days of the entry of the Order of Enforcement.

The Board filed a Petition for Discipline on June 18, 2012, a Supplemental Petition for Discipline on January 8, 2013, and a Second Supplemental Petition for Discipline on July 16, 2013. The petitions contained eight (8) complaints of misconduct. Mr. Nolan delegated sole responsibility for management of his trust account to his mother, a non-lawyer employee. She misappropriated client funds from his trust account without his knowledge in order to pay the expenses of his law practice and other businesses owned by him. As a result, a number of clients were significantly delayed in receiving the proceeds of their settlements and some never received all the funds to which they were entitled. Payments owed to third parties were delayed or not made at all. Mr. Nolan failed to communicate adequately with these clients and failed to provide them with timely, accurate settlement statements. Mr. Nolan failed to adequately supervise his non-lawyer employee and failed to maintain client funds in his trust account. He non-suited one case without consulting with his clients. Mr. Nolan eventually left his private practice and became in-house counsel for a corporation. Mr. Nolan failed to advise one client that he had done so, failed to communicate with that client and failed to properly withdraw from his case. While employed as in-house counsel, Mr. Nolan improperly borrowed money from his employer/client.

Mr. Nolan's ethical misconduct violates Rules of Professional Conduct 1.2, Scope of Representation; 1.4, Communication; 1.5, Fees; 1.8, Conflict of Interest; 1.15, Safekeeping Property and Funds; 1.16, Declining or Terminating Representation; and 8.4, Misconduct.

Mr. Nolan must comply with the requirements of Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 9, Sections 18 (2006) and 30 (2014), regarding the obligations and responsibilities of suspended attorneys and the procedure for reinstatement.