



**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
FAX: (615) 367-2480
E-MAIL: ethics@tbpr.org
Website: www.tbpr.org

RELEASE OF INFORMATION
RE: MICHAEL GIBBS SHEPPARD, BPR #019868
CONTACT: ALAN D. JOHNSON
BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
615-361-7500

August 14, 2018

WILLIAMSON COUNTY LAWYER SUSPENDED

Effective August 13, 2018, the Supreme Court of Tennessee suspended Michael Gibbs Sheppard from the practice of law for a period of sixty (60) days, followed by two (2) years of probation under the supervision of a practice monitor. Mr. Sheppard is required to take fifteen (15) hours of continuing legal education on law office management and trust accounting procedures.

The Board of Professional Responsibility filed a petition for discipline against Mr. Sheppard based upon two (2) complaints of ethical misconduct. A hearing panel found that Mr. Sheppard failed to properly maintain and monitor client trust accounts, which resulted in the commingling of client funds, use of client funds to pay for operating expenses, and a diminished balance of client funds in the trust account. The hearing panel found that Mr. Sheppard knowingly misled at least one client about the status of the client's trust funds; however, they found Mr. Sheppard's acts were not intentional and did not seriously injure any clients.

The Board appealed the decision of the hearing panel to a trial court and to the Tennessee Supreme Court. The Tennessee Supreme Court held that the hearing panel decision was supported by substantial and material evidence, was not arbitrary and capricious or an abuse of discretion.

Mr. Sheppard's conduct violated Tennessee Rules of Professional conduct 1.15 (safekeeping property and funds) and 8.4 (misconduct).

Mr. Sheppard must comply with the requirements of Tennessee Supreme Court Rule 9, Sections 28 and 30, regarding the obligations and responsibilities of suspended attorneys and may not return to the active practice of law until an order of reinstatement has been entered by the Supreme Court.