



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

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**RELEASE OF INFORMATION**  
**RE: JOHN TERENCE TENNYSON, BPR #32777**  
**CONTACT: KEVIN D. BALKWILL**  
**BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**  
**615-361-7500**

July 19, 2019

**DAVIDSON COUNTY LAWYER CENSURED**

On July 19, 2019, John Terence Tennyson, an attorney licensed to practice law in Tennessee, received a Public Censure from the Board of Professional Responsibility of the Tennessee Supreme Court.

Mr. Tennyson entered into a written agreement with his client for representation in a civil matter to be specifically filed in federal court. The agreement required payment of a \$5,000.00 flat fee plus a contingent fee based upon recovery by settlement or judgment. The fee was not designated as a non-refundable fee and a penalty provision required his client to pay Mr. Tennyson at the rate of \$370.00 per hour for his time if the representation was terminated. Mr. Tennyson was not diligent in the preparation and filing of the civil action despite regular assurances that it would be filed soon. Mr. Tennyson's non-lawyer assistant inappropriately discussed legal matters directly with his client. After his client terminated the legal representation, Mr. Tennyson filed a civil action in state court without the client's consent. Mr. Tennyson failed to timely serve summons upon the defendants and failed to formally withdraw from the action. The case was ultimately dismissed for lack of prosecution. Mr. Tennyson acknowledged that he did not keep contemporaneous billing records of his time nor did he have an itemized billing statement and was thus required to provide the unearned portion of his fee to his client.

By these acts, John Terence Tennyson has violated Rule of Professional Conduct 1.2 (scope of representation), 1.3 (diligence), 1.4 (communication), 1.5 (fees), 1.15(d) (safekeeping property), 1.16 (terminating representation), 3.2 (expediting litigation), 3.4(c) (disobeying obligation under rules of tribunal), 5.3 (responsibilities regarding non-lawyer assistance), and 8.4(a)(d) (misconduct) and is hereby Publicly Censured for these violations. As a condition of the Public Censure, Mr. Tennyson shall be required to reimburse \$2,500.00 in fees directly to his client within 90 days of the date set forth herein.

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