



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

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RELEASE OF INFORMATION
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BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY
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May 30, 2012

SEVIER COUNTY LAWYER SUSPENDED

On May 25, 2012, the Tennessee Supreme Court suspended the law license of William Lee Wheatley, a Sevier County attorney, for a period of two years, with 120 days actual suspension and the remaining twenty months probation. The Court ordered that Mr. Wheatley maintain strict compliance with his Tennessee Lawyers Assistance Program (TLAP) monitoring agreement, and ordered that Mr. Wheatley pay \$14,870 in restitution to former clients.

The Board of Professional Responsibility filed a Petition for Discipline against Mr. Wheatley, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 9, Section 8.2. A Hearing Panel found Mr. Wheatley neglected clients' cases; failed to communicate with clients; accepted legal fees after being temporarily suspended; failed to repay loans from a client's father; and entered a guilty plea to misdemeanor reckless endangerment.

Mr. Wheatley's actions violated the following Rules of Professional Conduct: 1.3 (diligence); 1.4 (communication); 1.5 (fees); 1.16 (terminating representation); 3.2 (expediting litigation); 8.1 (disciplinary matters) and 8.4 (misconduct).

Mr. Wheatley was ordered to pay the expenses and costs of the disciplinary proceedings against him, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule 9, Section 24.3, and fully comply in all respects with the requirements and obligations of suspended attorneys as set forth in Supreme Court Rule 9, Section 18.

Wheatley 2039-1 rel.doc

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