

VIRGINIA:

BEFORE THE SECOND DISTRICT SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR

IN THE MATTER OF
PAUL GRANVILLE WATSON, IV

VS B Docket No. 08-022-071777

SUBCOMMITTEE DETERMINATION
(PUBLIC REPRIMAND WITHOUT TERMS)

On February 11, 2009, a hearing in this matter was held before a duly convened Second District Subcommittee consisting of Mark Del Duca, Esquire, Mr. David Jones, lay member, and Bobby W. Davis, Esquire, Chair.

Pursuant to Part 6, Section IV, Paragraphs 13.G.4. and 13 G.1.d.(3) of the Rules of the Virginia Supreme Court, the Second District Subcommittee of the Virginia State Bar hereby serves upon the Respondent the following Public Reprimand without terms entered into as an agreed disposition between the bar and the Respondent:

I. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. At all times relevant hereto, Paul Granville Watson, IV, hereinafter "Respondent", has been an attorney licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
2. On or about November 14, 2006, Ester Nicholson retained Respondent to represent her in divorce proceedings by paying him an advance fee of \$1,000.00. The divorce was initiated by her husband's filing of a Bill of Complaint on or about November 3, 2006. The couple had no minor children. Each worked in the husband's business, a retail store inherited from husband's father.
3. On November 28, 2006, Respondent filed an answer and counterclaim and requested pendente lite relief. On December 1, 2006, the Court held a hearing on pending motions for pendente lite relief and failed to grant Ms. Nicholson the support Respondent requested.

4. Other than attending a court-ordered settlement conference on March 21, 2007-- which collapsed that day, Respondent took no further steps on behalf of his client until he propounded his first discovery on July 3, 2007 and again moved for pendente lite support. Although Respondent set the support hearing for August 6, 2007, he later discovered he had another matter scheduled and had to continue the support matter to a later date.
5. On or before August 13, 2007, Ms. Nicholson terminated Respondent and retained successor counsel.
6. Thereafter, Ms. Nicholson filed an Inquiry Form with the bar regarding said representation, and the bar opened an active investigation into Respondent's representation.
7. On August 24, 2007, the bar sent Respondent formal notice of the investigation along with a copy of Ms. Nicholson's complaint. Therein, the bar demanded that Respondent submit a written answer to the complaint within 21 days. Citing Rule 8.1(c), the bar advised Respondent that : "Failure to respond in a timely manner to this and other lawful demands from the bar for information about the complaint may result in the imposition of disciplinary sanctions."
8. Notwithstanding the bar's demand, Respondent failed to respond to the bar's demand for a written answer to the complaint.
9. With Respondent failing to answer the complaint, the bar was compelled to refer this matter to the Second District Committee for a full investigation on September 26, 2007. In conjunction with this, the bar issued a subpoena duces tecum for Respondent's client file on September 26, 2007. With the subpoena, the bar advised Respondent that "failure to comply with this lawful demand can subject you to additional disciplinary sanctions, including an interim suspension under Paragraph 13.B.5.b.(3) and other sanctions under Rule of Professional Conduct 8.1(c)." Respondent complied with said subpoena.
10. On September 23, 2008, the bar sent Respondent a letter requesting that Respondent supplement his prior response to the bar's subpoena on or before October 3, 2008. Respondent received the request for supplementation on September 25, 2008. Notwithstanding said request, Respondent failed to respond to the bar.
11. On October 7, 2008, the bar filed a Notice of Non-Compliance and Request for Suspension of Respondent's law license. Respondent received the Notice on October 8, 2008.

12. On October 8, 2008, Respondent supplemented his subpoena response.

II. NATURE OF MISCONDUCT

Such conduct by Paul Granville Watson, IV constitutes misconduct in violation of the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct:

RULE 1.3 Diligence

- (a) A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

RULE 8.1 Bar Admission And Disciplinary Matters

An applicant for admission to the bar, or a lawyer already admitted to the bar, in connection with a bar admission application, any certification required to be filed as a condition of maintaining or renewing a license to practice law, or in connection with a disciplinary matter, shall not:

- (c) fail to respond to a lawful demand for information from an admissions or disciplinary authority, except that this Rule does not require disclosure of information otherwise protected by Rule 1.6;

III. PUBLIC REPRIMAND WITHOUT TERMS

Accordingly, it is the decision of the subcommittee to impose a Public Reprimand and the Respondent is hereby so reprimanded.

Pursuant to Paragraph 13.B.8.c., the Clerk of the Disciplinary System shall assess costs.

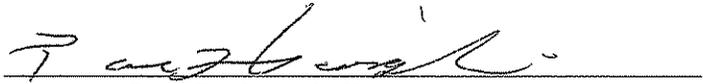
SECOND DISTRICT SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR

By _____


Bobby W. Davis
Subcommittee Chair

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on the 23rd day of March, 2009, I caused to be mailed by Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested, a true and correct copy of the Subcommittee Determination (PUBLIC Reprimand Without Terms) to Paul Granville Watson, IV, Esquire, Respondent, at, P.O. Box 600, Eastville, VA 23347, his last address of record with the Virginia State Bar.



Paul D. Georgiadis
Assistant Bar Counsel