

VIRGINIA:

**BEFORE THE FIFTH DISTRICT--SECTION III SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR**

**IN THE MATTER OF ROBERT JOSEPH HILL, ESQ.
VSB Docket # 04-053-3103**

**SUBCOMMITTEE DETERMINATION
PUBLIC REPRIMAND**

On January 13, 2005, a meeting in this matter was held before a duly convened Fifth District--Section III Subcommittee consisting of Angela Lemmon Horan, Esq., Mr. Paul C. Moessner, lay member, and Elizabeth M. von Keller, Esq., presiding, to review an Agreed Disposition reached by the parties.

Pursuant to the provisions of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Part 6, § IV, ¶13(G), the Fifth District--Section III Subcommittee of the Virginia State Bar hereby serves upon the Respondent the following Public Reprimand, as set forth below:

I. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. At all times relevant hereto, Robert Joseph Hill, Esq. (hereafter "Respondent"), was an attorney licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
2. The Respondent was hired by a client (hereafter "Complainant") on March 21, 2002, to negotiate a reduction of a substantial child support arrearage owed by the Complainant, and to resolve other issues related thereto.
3. The Respondent did negotiate with the Virginia child support enforcement authorities so as to permit the Complainant to retain his Virginia driving privileges in exchange for

payment of a certain portion of the accrued arrearage. In addition, the Respondent made inquiries on the Complainant's behalf to determine the basis for the arrearages being claimed.

4. The Complainant filed a Bar Complaint in March of 2004 because the Respondent had stopped performing services on the Complainant's behalf and had failed to communicate with the Complainant for a period in excess of ten months, despite the Complainant's repeated inquiries.

5. After the Bar Complaint was filed, the Respondent returned the Complainant's advanced fee in the sum of \$2,000.00 and promised the Complainant that he, the Respondent, would perform the required remaining legal services on the Complainant's behalf.

6. The Respondent met with the Complainant in June of 2004. Between the time of that meeting and the date of the Agreed Disposition, January 7, 2005, upon which this Determination is based, the Respondent has failed to attend to the Complainant's legal matter.

7. Interest has continued to accrue against the Complainant on the claimed arrearage during the pendency of the legal matter entrusted to the Respondent.

II. NATURE OF MISCONDUCT

The Subcommittee finds that the following Rules of Professional Conduct have been violated:

RULE 1.3 Diligence

- (a) A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.
- (b) A lawyer shall not intentionally fail to carry out a contract of employment entered into with a client for professional services, but may withdraw as permitted under Rule 1.16.

- (c) A lawyer shall not intentionally prejudice or damage a client during the course of the professional relationship, except as required or permitted under Rule 1.6 and Rule 3.3.

RULE 1.4 Communication

- (a) A lawyer shall keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.

III. PUBLIC REPRIMAND

Accordingly, it is the decision of the Subcommittee to impose a PUBLIC REPRIMAND on Respondent, Robert Joseph Hill, Esquire, and he is so reprimanded.

IV. COSTS

Pursuant to Part Six, § IV, ¶ 13(B)(8)(c) of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Clerk of the Disciplinary System shall assess costs against the Respondent.

**FIFTH DISTRICT - SECTION III SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR**

By Elizabeth M. von Keller
Elizabeth M. von Keller
Chair/Chair Designate

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that I have this 5th day of January, 2005, mailed a true and correct copy of the Subcommittee Determination (PUBLIC REPRIMAND) by CERTIFIED MAIL, RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED, to the Respondent, Robert Joseph Hill, Esq., 10347 Democracy Lane, Fairfax, Virginia 22030, his address of record with the Virginia State Bar.

Seth M. Guggenheim
Seth M. Guggenheim
Assistant Bar Counsel