

VIRGINIA:

BEFORE THE SIXTH DISTRICT SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR

WILLIAM STEPHEN COLEMAN  
VSB Docket No. 14-060-097923

**SUBCOMMITTEE DETERMINATION  
PUBLIC REPRIMAND WITHOUT TERMS**

On 23 October, 2014 a meeting was held in this matter before a duly convened Sixth District Subcommittee consisting of Andrew J. Cornick, Esquire, Chair, R. Barrow Blackwell, Esquire, Member, and James G. Bruce, III, Lay Member. During the meeting, the Subcommittee voted to approve an agreed disposition for a Public Reprimand without Terms pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-15.B.4. of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia. The agreed disposition was entered into by the Virginia State Bar, by Prescott L. Prince, Assistant Bar Counsel, and William Stephen Coleman, Respondent, *pro se*.

WHEREFORE, the Sixth District Subcommittee of the Virginia State Bar hereby serves upon Respondent the following Public Reprimand without Terms:

**I. FINDINGS OF FACT**

1. At all times relevant hereto, William Stephen Coleman (hereinafter “Respondent” or “Mr. Coleman”) has been an attorney licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
2. The Complainant in this matter (hereinafter, “Mr. W\*\*\*\*”) petitioned the Juvenile Court of Hanover County for a reduction of child support. At the time he filed his petition, Mr. W\*\*\*\* was incarcerated at the Adult Detention Center (ADC) in Manassas, VA.

The Court determined that Mr. W\*\*\*\* was under a legal disability and appointed Mr. Coleman as his guardian *ad litem* (GAL).

3. Mr. Coleman sent a letter to Mr. W\*\*\*\* advising him of the appointment and Mr. Coleman responded by letter, asking that Mr. Coleman contact him. Mr. W\*\*\*\* sent a letter response to Mr. Coleman in which he informed him that he could receive telephone calls at the ADC and asked Mr. Coleman to call him in order that he could discuss his case with him.

4. Mr. Coleman did not attempt to call Mr. W\*\*\*\* prior to the hearing on his petition.

5. Mr. Coleman did appear in behalf of Mr. W\*\*\*\* at the hearing in the Hanover Juvenile and Domestic Relations Court. Notwithstanding his appearance and argument in behalf of Mr. W\*\*\*\* the case was summarily dismissed.

6. Mr. Coleman failed to notify Mr. W\*\*\*\* that the matter had been dismissed. Mr. Coleman would contend, however, that the court did notify Mr. W\*\*\*\* in a timely manner and that his failure to notify Mr. W\*\*\*\* did not deprive him of the opportunity to appeal.

7. As a result of the above described actions, Mr. W\*\*\*\* filed a Bar Complaint against Mr. Coleman and an investigation was opened by the Virginia State Bar. When interviewed by a Virginia State Bar Investigator in furtherance of the investigation, Mr. Coleman acknowledged his failure to communicate with the client.

## **II. NATURE OF MISCONDUCT**

Such conduct by William Stephen Coleman constitutes misconduct in violation of the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct as specified for each matter:

### **Rule 1.3      Diligence**

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

**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.
- (b) A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation.

**III. PUBLIC REPRIMAND WITHOUT TERMS**

Accordingly, having approved the agreed disposition, it is the decision of the Subcommittee to impose a **Public Reprimand Without Terms** and William Stephen Coleman is hereby so reprimanded. Pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-9.E of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Clerk of the Disciplinary System shall assess costs.


SIXTH DISTRICT SUBCOMMITTEE  
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR

By: \_\_\_\_\_

  
Andrew J. Cornick  
Subcommittee Chair

**CERTIFICATE OF MAILING**

I certify that on 3 November, 2014 a true and complete copy of the Subcommittee Determination (Public Reprimand Without Terms) was sent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to William Stephen Coleman at 9509 Fawn Park Lane, Mechanicsville, VA 23116 that being, Respondent's last address of record with the Virginia State Bar.

  
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Prescott L. Prince  
Assistant Bar Counsel