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CLIENT PROTECTION

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Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection Releases First-Quarter Report

During the first quarter of 2022, the New Jersey Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection, funded by the state's lawyers and judges, paid $253,026.87 to clients for losses caused by nine lawyers, the Board of Trustees announced today.

The purpose of the fund is to pay on behalf of the honest majority of lawyers for the wrongdoing of the few who are suspended or disbarred for misappropriation. In its 53-year history, the fund has paid claims against a total of 873 attorneys. There are 99,107 lawyers licensed in New Jersey.

The fund operates under the authority of the Supreme Court pursuant to Court Rule 1:28. The court appoints the seven trustees, five attorneys and two public members, who serve staggered 5-year terms without compensation. The

trustees consider clients' claims and make awards when it is determined that the loss was caused by dishonest lawyer conduct, under fund rules. Cases involving legal malpractices and negligence are handled through civil court actions and fee disputes through the district fee arbitration committees established by the Supreme Court.

For a claim to be compensable, the attorney against whom it is filed must have been a member of the bar, acting as either attorney or fiduciary, at the time of the incident; and unless deceased, must have been disbarred or suspended from the bar, or convicted of embezzlement or other misappropriation of property.

A claimant can receive up to $400,000 if their claim is approved, and the fund can pay up to $1.5 million in claims against any one lawyer. Special permission can be granted by the Supreme Court to exceed the aggregate limit.

To receive a claim form, write to the New Jersey Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection, Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex, P.O. Box 961, Trenton, NJ 08625-0961, or call 855-533-FUND (3863). The form must be completed, signed, and returned with copies of any proofs of the transaction. There is no filing fee. Claimants assisted in their claims by practicing attorneys receive their representation free of charge. Fund Director Michael T. McCormick welcomes inquiries about the fund's purpose and operation.

Attached is a list of the first quarter claim awards and status of each attorney under the Supreme Court discipline system.

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