

ANNUAL REPORT



2024

Johanna Barba Jones
Director

Jason D. Saunders
First Assistant Ethics Counsel

Table of Contents

I.	Executive Summary	1
II.	Introduction	3
III.	2024 New Jersey Attorney Data	8
IV.	A Culture of Compliance: 2024 Regulatory Efforts Short of Investigation	15
V.	Subtracting That Which is Not Misconduct	26
VI.	Disciplinary Investigations	36
VII.	Agreements in Lieu of Discipline (“Diversion”)	40
VIII.	Substantiated Cases Which Are Not Minor	42
IX.	Sanctions	44
X.	Grounds for Final Discipline	48
XI.	After Discipline: Monitoring & Reinstatement	49
XII.	Appendix	52

Table of Figures

	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
Figure 1	Number of New Jersey Lawyers Over Time	8
Figure 2	Distribution of New Jersey Bar by Period of Admission	9
Figure 3	New Jersey Attorney Age	9
Figure 4	New Jersey Attorneys and Private Practice	11
Figure 5	Firm Structure	12
Figure 6	New Jersey Law Firm Size	13
Figure 7	New Jersey Attorney Fixed Physical Office Locations	14
Figure 8	Random Audit Program: Educational Audits and Disciplinary Referrals	18
Figure 9	Trends in Overdraft Notification Reporting to the OAE	20
Figure 10	Disposition of 2024 Overdraft Notifications Received	21
Figure 11	Causes of Overdrafts in Closed Matters	22
Figure 12	Number of Attorneys Receiving Final Discipline Resulting From Overdraft Investigation	23
Figure 13	Fee Arbitration Filings	30
Figure 14	Fee Arbitration Outcomes	31
Figure 15	Fee Arbitration Case Values	32
Figure 16	Nature of Fee Arbitration Cases 2023-2024	33
Figure 17	Disability Inactive Orders Volume 2019-2024	35
Figure 18	Docketed Grievances	37
Figure 19	% of Active Lawyers Investigated and Charged 2019-2024	37
Figure 20	Investigative Time Goal Compliance	38
Figure 21	Average Age of Investigation in days 2019-2023	39

Figure 22	New Jersey Attorneys Approved for Diversion	41
Figure 23	New Formal Disciplinary Complaints Added 2019-2023	43
Figure 24	Final Discipline Types	45
Figure 25	Final Discipline Types 2018-2024	46
Figure 26	Disciplinary Sanctions 2019-2023	47
Figure 27	Most Common Primary Grounds for Final Discipline	48
Figure 28	Number of New Jersey Attorneys Subjected to Monitoring	49
Figure 29	Reinstatement Orders	51

TABLE OF APPENDIX

	<u>Description</u>	<u>Page</u>
Table 1	District Ethics Committee Officers as of September 1, 2024	52
Table 2	District Fee Arbitration Committee Officers as of September 1, 2024	53
Table 3	Disciplinary Oversight Committee as of September 1, 2024	54
Table 4	Year Admitted	55
Table 5	Age Groups	55
Table 6	Admissions in Other Jurisdictions	56
Table 7	New Jersey Admitted Attorney Law Offices by State	57
Table 8	New Jersey Practitioner Law Offices by County	57
Table 9	OAE Yearly Discipline Report	58
Table 10	2024 Disciplinary Summaries	64

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As of December 31, 2024:

- New Jersey's licensed attorney population was 100,759 – one attorney for every 94 citizens of our state.
- During 2024, the Garden State had the 6th highest number of attorneys admitted to practice in the nation, with that ranking unchanged since 2017.
- During 2024, New Jersey ranked 39th in the country in annual attorney licensing fees charged (at \$267).
- During 2024, a total of 895 attorneys and non-attorney public members volunteered to serve the Court on the 18 District Ethics Committees (613 volunteers) and the 17 District Fee Arbitration Committees (282 volunteers).
- In 2024, the OAE and the 18 District Ethics Committees received 2,925 unique grievances alleging misconduct by New Jersey attorneys, a 14.6% increase over 2023.
- New investigations decreased by 5.7% during 2024 (total: 867) from the filings in 2023 (total: 919).
- New formal disciplinary complaints increased by 43% in 2024 (total: 216) compared to 2023 (total: 151). This total still remains below pre-pandemic averages.
- Twenty more attorneys received final discipline in 2024 (total: 122) than in 2023 (total: 102). This remains below the pre-pandemic average.
- The OAE's yearly average investigative time goal compliance increased by 8% during 2024, from 69% in 2023 to 77% in 2024.
- District Ethics Committees' yearly average time goal compliance for 2024 increased by 3%, from 49% in 2023 to 52% in 2024.
- District Fee Arbitration Committees handled a total of 287 cases involving more than \$5.9 million in legal fees during 2024.
- The OAE's Random Audit Compliance Program conducted 744 audits of law firms in 2024.
- Sixteen (16) lawyers were disciplined (including three disbarments) through the detection efforts of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

- In 2024, 184 attorney trust account and IOLTA attorney trust account overdrafts were reported to the OAE.
- A total of 14 lawyers were disciplined in 2024 due to the Trust Account Overdraft Notification Program.

II. INTRODUCTION

The 1947 New Jersey Constitution provides that the “Supreme Court shall have jurisdiction over the admission to the practice of law and the discipline of persons admitted.” That constitutional mandate has evolved into a comprehensive system for attorney regulation which guides and governs New Jersey lawyers throughout their careers.

The Supreme Court primarily communicates its expectations regarding the practice of law through Court Rules. The nuts and bolts of the practice of law, including attorneys’ financial recordkeeping obligations, are explained in R. 1:21-1 to -12. The ethical expectations of attorneys are explained in the Rules of Professional Conduct (the RPCs) (which are made expressly binding upon attorneys by operation of R. 1:14).

Beyond expressing its expectations in Rules, the Court has created regulatory entities to serve its constitutional mandate. First, the Committee on Character and the Board of Bar Examiners screen individuals proposing to enter the profession. Other Supreme Court Committees provide advisory services: Advisory Committee on Professional Ethics (ACPE); Committee on Attorney Advertising (CAA); and Committee on the Unauthorized Practice of Law (CUPL). Those entities meet periodically to consider novel issues. Their decisions do not reference particular cases or controversies and are published for the use of the entire bar.

Not all ethical dilemmas are novel or unfold slowly enough that a practitioner can wait for a written decision. Recognizing this, the Court also provides an Ethics Hotline to assist attorneys to resolve day-to-day ethical dilemmas. Questions posed to the Ethics Hotline are not shared with disciplinary authorities. R. 1:19-9(d) expressly states “[n]either the fact that an inquiry has been made nor the results thereof, shall be admissible in any legal proceeding, including an attorney or judicial discipline proceeding.”

Another way in which the Court has exercised its power to assist practicing attorneys is through the creation, in 1999, and annual funding of the New Jersey Lawyers’ Assistance Program (NJLAP). Managed by the New Jersey State Bar Association (NJSBA), the NJLAP is a “free and confidential resource assisting all NJ Lawyers, Judges, Law Students, and Law Graduates to achieve and maintain personal and professional well-being.” Like the Ethics Hotline,

NJLAP has no reporting relationships with the Office of Attorney Ethics (the OAE), bar associations, or any entity or tribunal. Its services are confidential, and stand under the broad offering, “[n]o matter what the problem, you need not manage alone.” Although there is no limitation on NJLAP’s service areas, it explicitly covers “depression, stress, anxiety, alcohol & substance abuse, and gambling issues.” Through the NJLAP, the Court strives to eliminate stigma for seeking professional and personal support.

Sometimes, all the Court’s prevention and educational structure are not enough. Accordingly, the Court created the attorney disciplinary system.

The attorney disciplinary system exists to protect the public and the reputation of the bar. To support this role, the Court initially created two governmental entities to serve that disciplinary mission: the OAE and the Disciplinary Review Board (the DRB). In general terms, the OAE is the investigative and, when appropriate, prosecutorial arm of the New Jersey attorney disciplinary system; the DRB is the intermediate appellate tribunal of the attorney disciplinary system. This year, the Court delegated some constitutional authority to a third body: the Attorney Regulatory Board, an adjudicative entity primarily responsible for reviewing and deciding petitions for readmission to the bar following disbarment.

The Court also created 36 volunteer entities to serve this mission: 18 local District Ethics Committees (the DEC’s), which are loosely organized around the Court’s county and vicinage system; 17 local District Fee Arbitration Committees (the DFAC’s); and one Disciplinary Oversight Committee (the DOC), charged with ensuring the effective and efficient operation of the disciplinary system. The DOC exercises that oversight predominantly through its review of the Attorney Disciplinary System Budget and a financial audit annually conducted by an outside firm.

This Annual Report is intended to broadly summarize the activity of the OAE. It is presented in the context of, and informed by, certain other data about New Jersey lawyers, acquired through the attorney registration system and maintained by the New Jersey Lawyers’ Fund for Client Protection (LFCP).

A. Attorney Discipline in Brief

The OAE investigates and prosecutes serious, complex, and emergent matters statewide. Attorney disciplinary matters of standard complexity are investigated by a devoted volunteer corps of more than 600 DEC members, both attorneys and members of the public, who are appointed to conduct this same important work on a more local level. In 2024, the Supreme Court appointed 613 volunteer members (499 attorneys and 114 public members), serving pro bono across the state. The DEC members were overseen and supported by Statewide Ethics Coordinator Ryan J. Moriarty.

The DEC leadership consists of three attorney officers: a chair, who serves as the chief executive officer responsible for all investigations; a vice chair, who is responsible for all cases in the hearing stage; and a secretary, a member of the bar serves as the administrator of that DEC. The secretary receives and screens all inquiries and grievances. The secretary is not a member of the DEC and, instead, functions as the DEC's link to the public, fielding all calls from members of the public and the Bar and providing information about the grievance and disciplinary process. Although secretaries receive an annual emolument to defray the expenses related to their duties, they are nonetheless volunteers, as are all the members of the DEC members.

DEC attorney members are assigned to investigate and, if necessary, prosecute grievances docketed with a DEC. Three-member hearing panels comprised of two attorneys and one public member decide cases after formal complaints have been filed.

Not all attorney ethics cases are fully litigated at a hearing. A significant proportion of cases proceed to appellate review by the DRB by consent, default, disciplinary stipulation, or a fully admitted complaint. During 2024, 61 oral arguments before the DRB occurred in ethics cases, with 49 of those appearances made by OAE ethics counsel and 12 by DEC attorney members. Those arguments may be viewed in real time, online, via the Court's Channels service.¹ The DRB's review is de novo on the existing record. The DRB publishes its own annual report, accessible on its website.²

¹ <https://www.njcourts.gov/public/channels>

² <https://www.njcourts.gov/attorneys/attorney-ethics-and-discipline/disciplinary-review-board>

Of course, the Supreme Court itself is the ultimate authority in attorney discipline. N.J. Const. art. VI, Section II, ¶3. The Court hears oral arguments in disciplinary matters at the Richard J. Hughes Justice Complex.³ Only the Court can Order disbarment of an attorney. In all other matters, the decision or recommendation of the DRB becomes final on the entry of a disciplinary order by the Court, unless the Court grants a petition for review or issues an Order to Show Cause on its own motion.

The OAE represents the public interest in all cases before the Court. During 2024, OAE ethics counsel appeared a total of 8 times for oral argument in 12 disciplinary cases. Arguments may be streamed in real time directly from the Court's website.

B. Non-Disciplinary Responsibilities of the OAE

The OAE is primarily known for conducting professional ethics investigations and prosecutions. Complex cases include Motions for Final Discipline under R. 1:20-13, where an attorney has been convicted of a crime, and Motions for Reciprocal Discipline under R. 1:20-14, where another jurisdiction has determined that a New Jersey attorney committed misconduct.

As reviewed above, the OAE provides legal and administrative support to the more than 600 volunteers who investigate “standard” ethics grievances and hold local hearings to dispose of them.

However, the work of the OAE also captures compliance activities, bar support activities, and follow-ups upon discipline which are not frequently associated with the OAE.

The OAE also serves both monitoring and supervision functions for the attorney disciplinary system. Particularly, the OAE has responsibility for the monitoring of disciplined attorneys to ensure their adherence to the Court-imposed conditions in final Orders of discipline.

Likewise, the Director of the OAE has the responsibility to monitor attorneys' adherence to conditions of diversion, a sort of pre-trial

³ <https://www.njcourts.gov/courts/supreme/supreme-court-webcast>

intervention for substantiated minor discipline cases, the admission to which is addressed in “Agreements in Lieu of Discipline” (“Diversion”) below.

Sometimes, an attorney must unexpectedly set aside the practice of law. Reasons range from unexpected incapacity, suspension, or disbarment of an attorney. In such situations, an Assignment Judge may appoint an attorney-trustee to wind down that attorney’s practice of law. By so doing, the Judiciary intends to protect the interests of the affected clients. The OAE provides support to Assignment Judges and the attorneys they appoint as trustees, tracking all trusteeships throughout the state. The OAE also publishes a guide for attorney trustees.⁴

The OAE provides legal and administrative support to the 17 DFACs who dispose of approximately \$6M in disputes concerning legal fees per year. That work is described in greater detail in “Subtracting That Which is Not Misconduct” below. The OAE’s administrative functions regarding the DEC and DFACs include facilitating the appointment of the nearly 900 volunteers upon whose talents those two important programs rely.

The OAE’s education and quality assurance work, including the Random Audit Program (RAP) and the Trust Account Overdraft Notification Program (TAONP), will be discussed in “Culture of Compliance” below.

These diverse services to the public and the bar in combination serve the two purposes of the attorney disciplinary system: to protect the reputation of the bar and to protect the public at large.

⁴ Office of Attorney Ethics, Closing or Assuming Temporary Control of Another Attorney’s Law Practice: Manual for New Jersey Attorney Trustees (March 2017). This document is available upon request. Sample forms for a [Verified Petition for Appointment of an Attorney-Trustee](#) and an [Order for Appointment of an Attorney-Trustee](#) may be accessed on the Judiciary’s website.

III. NEW JERSEY ATTORNEY DATA

According to a July 1, 2024 survey compiled by the OAE for the National Organization of Bar Counsel, Inc., a total of 2,253,552 lawyers were admitted to practice in the United States. New Jersey ranked 6th out of 51 jurisdictions in the total number of lawyers admitted, or 4.47% of the national total.

As of the end of December 2024, there were a total of 100,759 attorneys admitted to practice in the Garden State, or one lawyer for every 94 New Jersey citizens. The total number of New Jersey lawyers added to the bar population increased by .54% in 2024.

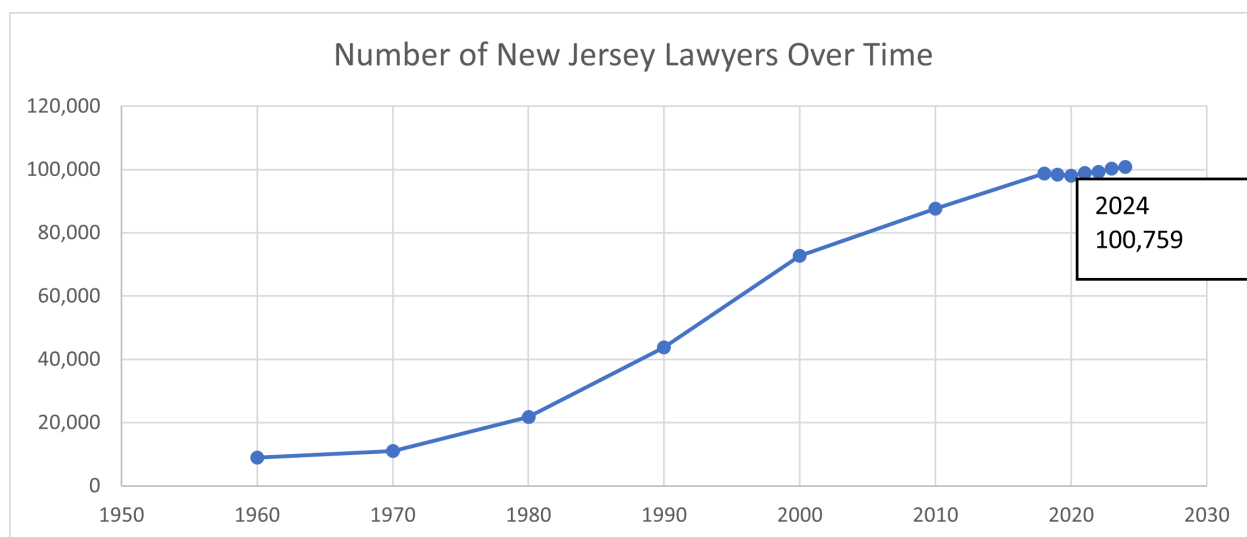


Figure 1

A. Admissions

As of December 31, 2024, 100,759⁵ attorneys are admitted in our state. Of those, 50.2% were admitted since 2001 and 22.1% were admitted between 1991-2000. The other 27.6% were admitted in 1990 or earlier.

⁵ This figure does not equal the total attorney population, as calculated by the LFCP, because the LFCP total does not include those attorneys who were suspended, deceased, disbarred, resigned, revoked, or placed on disability-inactive status after the attorney registration statements were received and tabulated.

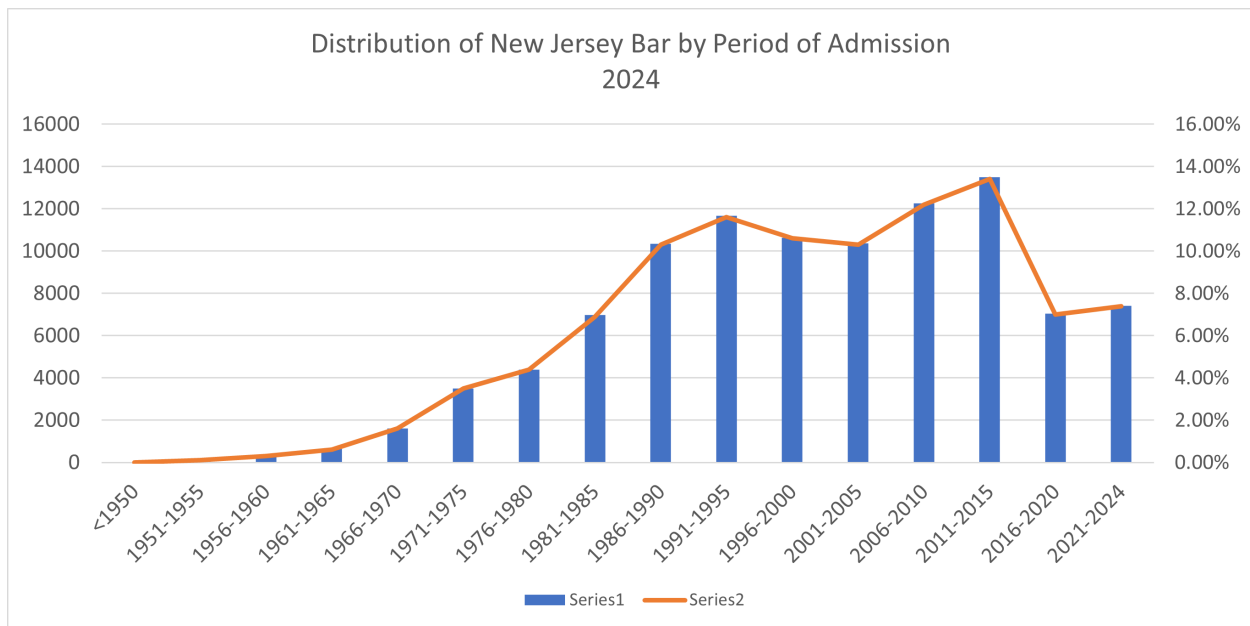


Figure 2

The data set may be viewed at Table 4 on page 59.

B. Attorney Age

Of the 100,759 attorneys for whom some registration information was available, 100,561 (99.8%) provided their date of birth. A total of 198 attorneys (0.2%) did not respond to this question.

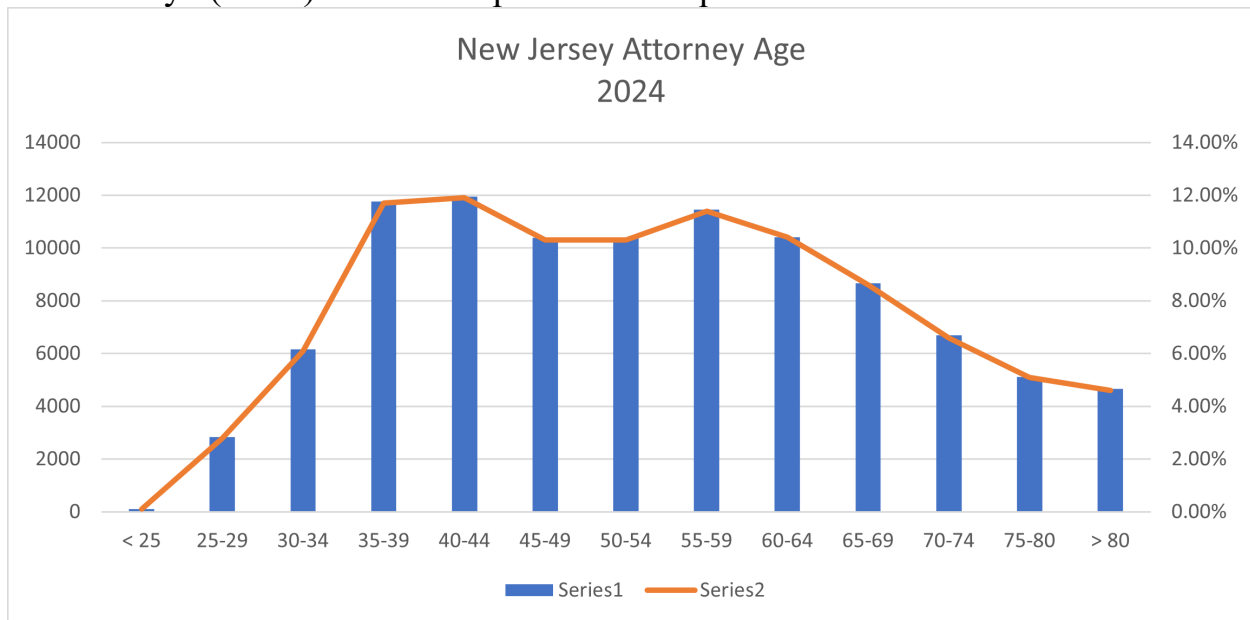


Figure 3

Attorneys in the 35-44 age range comprised the largest group of attorneys admitted to practice in New Jersey at 23.5% (23,695). The 50-59 year

category comprised 21.7%, or 21,819 lawyers. Another 10.3% (10,386) were between the ages of 45-49. The fewest numbers of attorneys were below the age of 29 and over the age of 70. The data set may be viewed at Table 5 on page 59.

C. Other Aggregate Demographic Data

In 2024, the Court released aggregate demographic information on attorney Race, Ethnicity, and Gender for the first time. That data was limited to 85,000 registrants, the majority of whom chose to self-identify their demographic characteristics. That full report may be found within the Court's August 13, 2024 Notice to the Bar.⁶

D. Other Admissions

More than 76.6% of the 100,759 attorneys for whom some registration information was available were admitted in other jurisdictions. Almost a quarter (23.4%) of all attorneys were admitted only in New Jersey. The three largest additional jurisdictions for New Jersey attorneys are New York (46.6%), Pennsylvania (26.5%), and the District of Columbia (6.8%). See Table 6, p. 57.

E. Private Practice

Of the 100,759 attorneys on whom registration information was tabulated, 36,081 stated that they engaged in the private practice of New Jersey law, either from offices within New Jersey or at locations elsewhere. Accordingly, almost thirty-six percent (35.8%) of the attorneys engaged in the private practice of New Jersey law, while 64.2% did not practice in the private sector.

⁶ <https://www.njcourts.gov/notices/notice-aggregate-new-jersey-attorney-demographic-information>

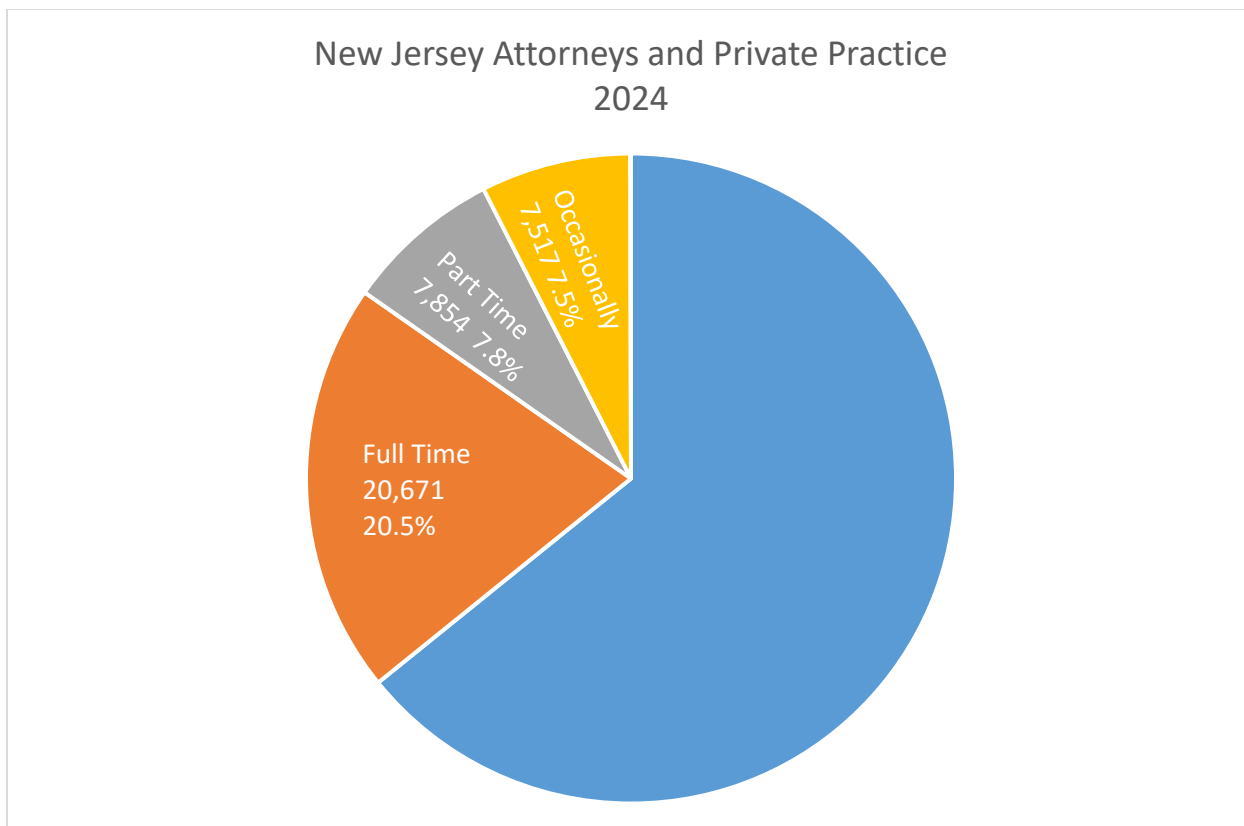


Figure 4

Of those who engaged in the private practice of New Jersey law, 99.9% responded to describe the amount of time devoted to the practice of law. Twenty percent (20.5%) practiced full-time, 7.8% rendered legal advice part-time, and 7.5% engaged in practice occasionally (defined as less than 5% of their time). Less than one percent (.04%) of responses were unspecified.

1. *Law Firm Structure*

Of the 36,081 attorneys who indicated they were engaged in the private practice of New Jersey law, 96.4% (34,790) provided information on the structure of their practice. The largest group self-identified as partners (33.6%; 12,130). Twenty-nine-point-one percent (29.1%) of the responding attorneys practiced in sole proprietorships (sole practitioners (9,272) plus sole stockholders (1,242)). Associates comprised 23.3% of the responses (8,418), followed by attorneys who were “of counsel” with 8.3% (2,991), and “other than sole stockholders” with 2.0% (737).



Figure 5

2. *Law Firm Size*

Ninety-nine point nine of those attorneys who identified themselves as being engaged in the private practice of law (36,081) indicated the size of the law firm of which they were a part. Twenty-eight point eight percent (10,403) said they practiced alone; 8.3% (3,004) worked in two-person law firms; 11.8% (4,268) belonged to law firms of 3-5 attorneys; 28.5% (10,280) were members of law firms with 6-49 attorneys, and 22.5% (8,099) worked in firms with 50 or more attorneys.

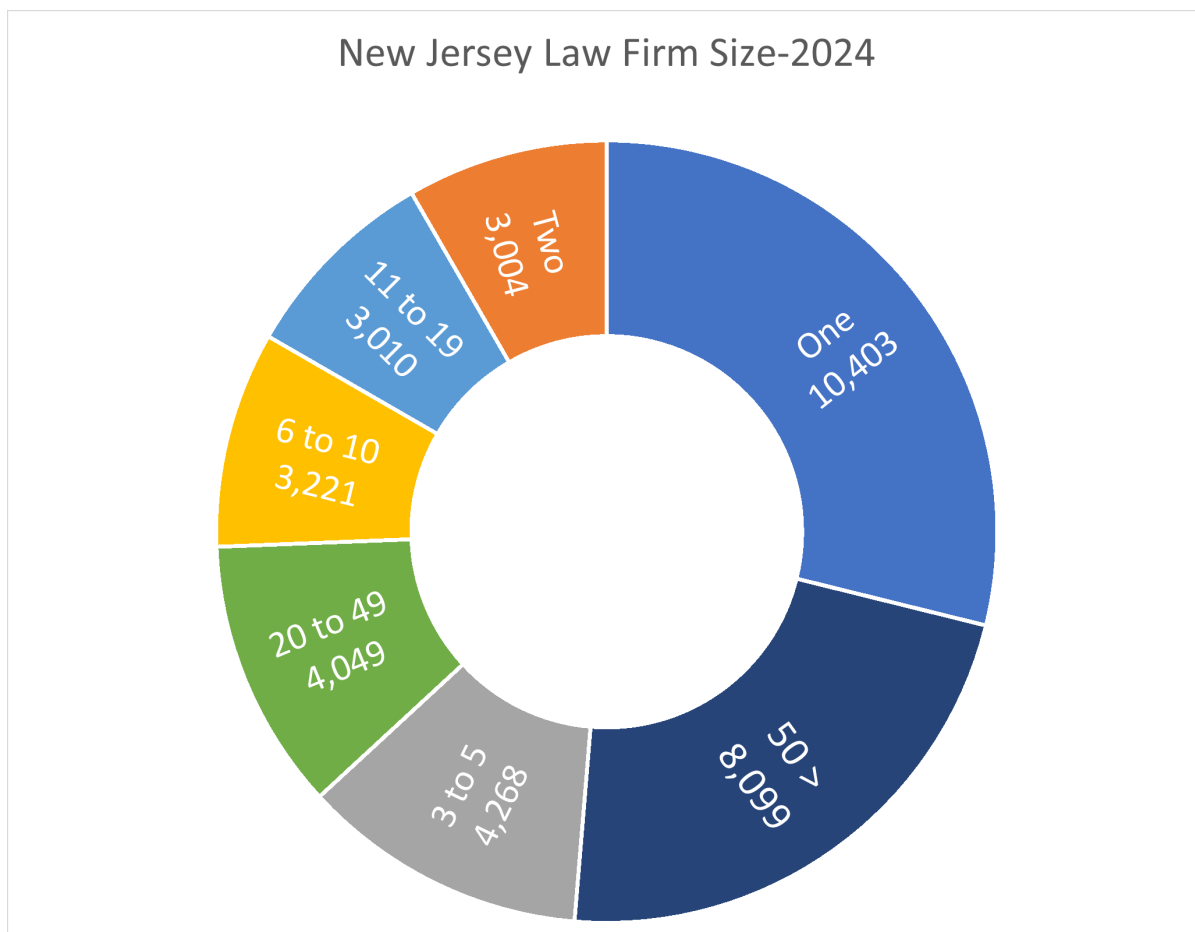


Figure 6

3. *New Jersey Offices*

New Jersey attorneys are no longer required to maintain a “bona fide” office in New Jersey. R. 1:21-1(a)(1). Nevertheless, in 2024, 26.1% of New Jersey attorneys (26,302) had a fixed physical location for the practice of law within the state. Twenty-seven point one percent (27.1%) of New Jersey attorneys (9,769) had offices located in other jurisdictions: New York 12.4% (4,465), Pennsylvania 12.2% (4,416), and Delaware less than 1% (0.4% 132). Other United States jurisdictions represent 2.1% (756). See Table 7, p. 58.

4. Fixed Physical Office Locations

The number of unique law firms registered in NJ today is 13,853.

During 2024, Essex County housed the largest number of private practitioners with 16.4% (4,314), followed by Bergen County with 13.2% (3,467). Morris County was third at 12.1% (3,190), and Camden County was fourth with 7.1% (2,090).

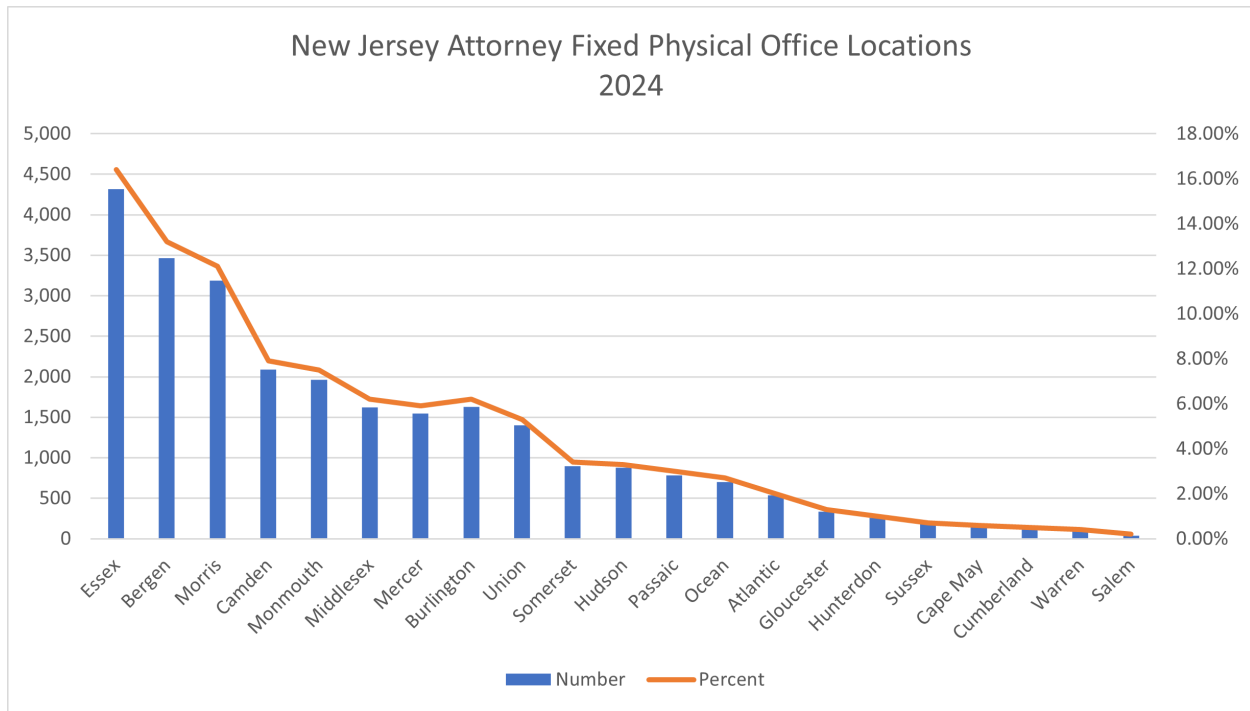


Figure 7

A full data set may be found in Table 8 on page 58.

IV. CULTURE OF COMPLIANCE

The OAE's programs support New Jersey attorneys' existing culture of compliance. The OAE's education and quality assurance efforts aim to ensure that attorneys understand the obligations of our profession, that minor deviation from those obligations are corrected through education, and that the attorney disciplinary system is well positioned to uniformly and fairly investigate serious deviations.

New Jersey has the most proactive financial programs of any state in the country, including the Trust Account Overdraft Notification Program (TAONP) and Random Audit Compliance Program (RAP). The impact of each program during 2024 is summarized below. When applicable, the impact of the TAONP and RAP is noted in each of the individual final discipline summaries appearing in the Appendix.

The OAE's staff also devotes considerable annual effort to preventive education of the bar and the training of its talented volunteer corps. Highlights of these programs appear below.

A. Random Audit Program (RAP)

The Supreme Court of New Jersey has been a national leader in protecting the public by actively auditing attorney trust accounts for compliance with mandatory fiduciary rules. New Jersey's RAP has been conducting financial compliance audits of law firms since July 1981. New Jersey is the state with the largest lawyer population in the country to conduct a random auditing program. During 2024, only eight other states had operational random programs. In order of implementation, they are Iowa (1973), Delaware (1974), Washington (1977), New Hampshire (1980), North Carolina (1984), Vermont (1990), Kansas (2000), and Connecticut (2007). During 2024, the California State Bar took steps to develop and implement a program to proactively conduct random audits of attorney trust accounts with an anticipated effective date of January 1, 2025.

In 2024, RAP staff was managed by Chief Auditor Joseph Strieffler, who joined the OAE in 1998 and was promoted to Chief of Random Audit in 2020. Other staff included two Senior Random Auditors and three Random Auditors.

Pursuant to R. 1:21-6, all private law firms are required to maintain trust and business accounts and are subject to random audit reviews. On average, at any given time, clients allow New Jersey lawyers to hold almost three billion dollars in primary attorney trust accounts (“IOLTA” trust accounts) alone. Even more money is controlled by New Jersey law firms in separate attorney trust and other fiduciary accounts in connection with estates, guardianships, receiverships, trusteeships, and other fiduciary capacities. Both public protection and the public’s trust in lawyers require a high degree of accountability.

Over 40 years after RAP first began, the conclusion is that the overwhelming majority of private New Jersey law firms (98.5%) account for their clients’ funds honestly and without incident. Technical accounting deficiencies are regularly found and corrected through education. Only 1.5% of the audits conducted over that period have found serious ethics violations, such as misappropriation of clients’ trust funds. Since law firms are selected randomly for audit on a statewide basis, the selections and, therefore, the results, are representative of the handling of trust monies by private practice firms. These results should give the public and the bar great trust and confidence in the honesty of lawyers and their ability to faithfully handle monies entrusted to their care.

The central objectives of the RAP are to ensure compliance with the Supreme Court’s financial recordkeeping Rules and to educate law firms on the proper method of fulfilling their fiduciary obligations to clients under R. 1:21-6. Another reason underlying the program is a by-product of the first — deterrence. Just knowing there is an active audit program is an incentive not only to keep accurate records but also to avoid temptations to misuse trust funds. Although not quantifiable, the deterrent effect on those few lawyers who might be tempted otherwise to abuse their clients’ trust is undeniably present. Random audits serve to detect misappropriation in those relatively small number of instances where it occurs.

To ensure the randomness of selection for an audit, RAP utilizes a computer program based on a Microsoft Corporation algorithm for randomness. All attorneys engaged in the private practice of law full- and part-time are in the pool of attorneys eligible to be audited. From that pool, attorneys are selected by a series of randomly generated 4-digit numbers that are cross-referenced to the law firm primary telephone numbers in the attorney registration

database. Only the last four digits of each law firm's unique telephone number are used as criteria to enable selection. The algorithm ignores the area codes and telephone prefixes of the law firm's telephone number. The algorithm automatically drops out of the selection process any attorneys possessing the same Firm ID number and any firm which has been the subject of a random audit that occurred within the past five (5) years. In this way, all law firms, regardless of size or location, have an equal likelihood of being selected for a random audit.

Court Rule 1:21-6 ("Recordkeeping") has provided attorneys with detailed guidance on handling trust and business accounts for more than 54 years. It is the uniform accounting standard for all audits. This Rule, which incorporates generally accepted accounting practices, also specifies in detail the types of accounting records that must be maintained and their location. It also requires monthly reconciliations, prohibits overdraft protection, electronic transfers which do not have corresponding written instructions to the Bank, the use of ATM cards for trust accounts, and requires a seven-year records retention schedule.

All private law firms and lawyers who engage in the private practice of law are required to maintain a trust account for all clients' funds entrusted to their care and a separate business account into which all funds received for professional services must be deposited. Trust accounts must be located in New Jersey. These accounts must be uniformly designated "Attorney Trust Account." Business accounts are required to be designated as either an "Attorney Business Account," "Attorney Professional Account," or "Attorney Office Account." All required books and records must be made available for inspection by RAP personnel. The confidentiality of audited records is maintained at all times.

Random audits are always scheduled in writing two to four weeks in advance. Although the audit scheduled date is firm, requests for adjournments are given close attention.

The auditor conducts an initial interview with the responsible attorney followed by the examination and testing of the law firm's financial recordkeeping system. At the conclusion of the audit, which averages one full day, the auditor offers to confer with the attorney in an exit conference to review and explain the findings. At that time, as applicable, the attorney is given a deficiency checklist, which highlights corrective action that must be

taken. Even in the case where no corrections are necessary to bring the firm into compliance with the Rule, the auditor may suggest improvements that will make the firm’s job of monitoring client funds more accurate.

The deficiency checklist is followed by a letter confirming the exit conference and describing any shortcomings for which corrective action is necessary. An acknowledgement of receipt and a response of corrections, and in some instances a certification, must be filed with the RAP within 45 days of the date of the letter, specifying how each deficiency has, in fact, been rectified. If the confirming letter is received from the attorney, the case is closed. If the letter is not received, a final ten-day letter advises the attorney that, if no confirming letter is received within ten days, the matter may be referred for formal disciplinary investigation which may result in the filing of a public disciplinary complaint.

The RAP also publishes a manual entitled [New Jersey Attorney’s Guide to the Random Audit Program and Attorney Trust Accounts and Recordkeeping](#). That manual is sent to all law firms with the initial random audit scheduling letter. Detailed information on the program is also available on the OAE’s website.

The RAP completed 744 audits of law firms in 2024, a decrease of 25 (3.25%) from 2023.

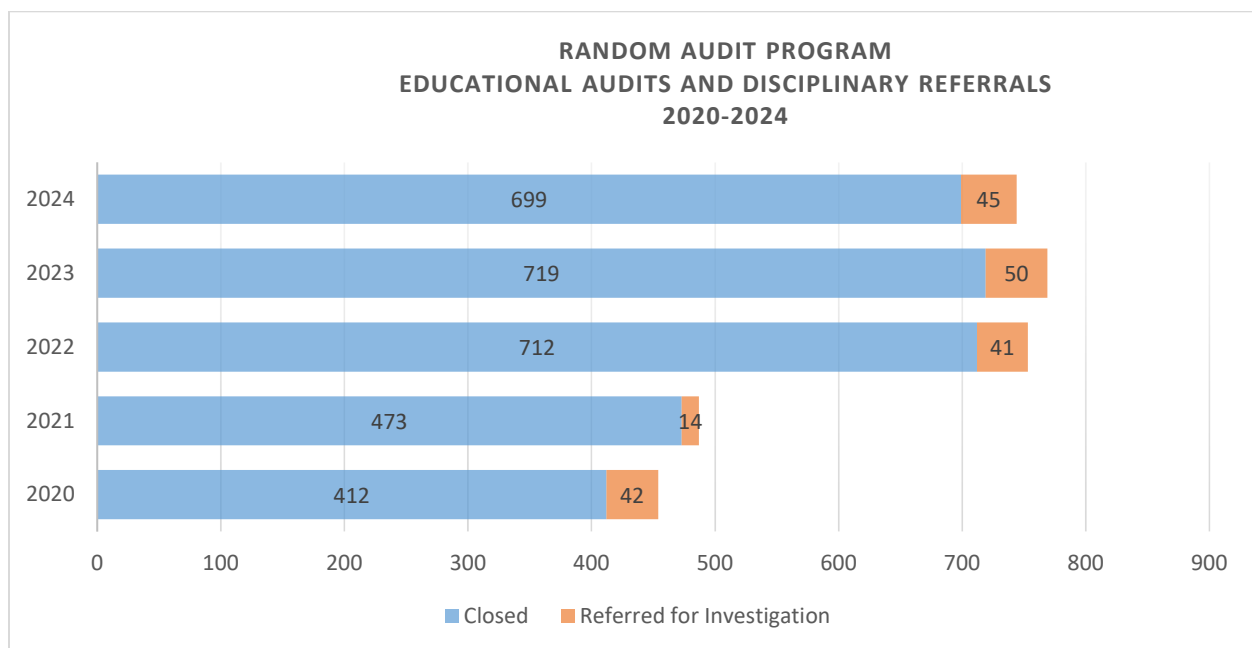


Figure 8

Each year, the RAP's staff of experienced auditors uncovers a small but significant number of cases of lawyer theft, knowing misappropriation, and other serious financial violations. This past year, sixteen (16) attorneys, detected solely by RAP, were disciplined by the Supreme Court.

During the forty-three years of RAP's operation, serious financial misconduct by 286 attorneys was detected solely as a result of being randomly selected for audit. Of those, 116 attorneys were disbarred; 26 were suspended for periods of one month to three years; 35 were censured; 78 were reprimanded; and 31 received admonitions.

The vast majority of the matters detected were very serious disciplinary cases that resulted in disbarment or suspension. Disbarred (116) and suspended (26) attorneys account for nearly five in ten of all attorneys disciplined as a result of RAP's efforts (49.7%). However, discipline alone does not adequately emphasize the full importance of RAP's role over the past forty-two years and the monies potentially saved by the LFCP as a result.

B. Trust Account Overdraft Notification Program (TAONP).

The OAE's Trust Account Overdraft Notification Program (TAONP) was managed by Chief of Investigations, Alison Picione, who joined the OAE in 2017 and was promoted to Chief in 2022. The TAONP has been in existence since 1985. Rule 1:21-6 requires financial institutions wishing to hold attorney trust funds to enter into a biennial agreement with the Supreme Court.

Each bank on the Supreme Court's approved list⁷ is required, pursuant to their agreement with the Supreme Court and in accordance with Rule 1:21-6(b), to report to the OAE any overdraft or item presented against insufficient funds in an attorney trust account or IOLTA attorney trust account. The overdraft notifications are received and reviewed by the Chief of Investigations.

⁷ <https://www.njcourts.gov/attorneys/attorney-ethics-and-discipline/approved-trust-account-banks>

In the event of an overdraft notification, the attorney is sent a letter requiring them to provide a documented explanation as to why the overdraft occurred. Each attorney is also required to produce for review a limited amount of trust account records (usually three months) which encompass the timeframe of the overdraft.

The majority of overdrafts are closed after receiving the attorney's documented explanation, provided the explanation is reasonable and there is no indication of recordkeeping deficiencies or a failure to safeguard client funds. If the attorney does not provide a fully responsive explanation, or the OAE's review raises concerns about proper recordkeeping or failure to protect client funds, the overdraft is assigned to an investigator or auditor for further investigation.

The OAE received 184 overdraft notifications in 2024, a 28.6% increase when compared to notifications received in 2023. Between 2020 and 2022, the number of overdraft notifications received by the OAE trended steadily downward. In 2023 and 2024, there was an increase in trust account notifications received, resulting in an upward trend:

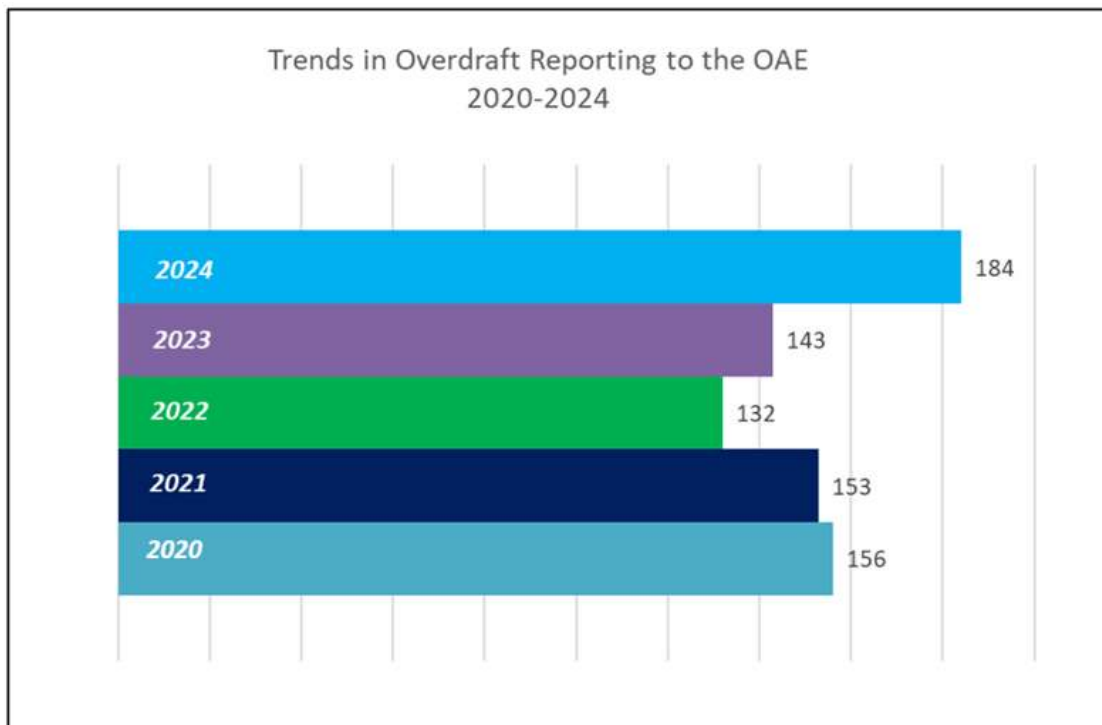


Figure 9

Of the 184 notifications received in 2024, 71% of matters (131) were reasonably explained by the attorney and the OAE closed those matters with no further action. Fifty-three, or 29% of overdraft notifications received were assigned for audit and investigation, to more closely evaluate the overdraft and because the attorney’s initial documented explanation raised concerns about improper recordkeeping and/or failure to safeguard client funds.

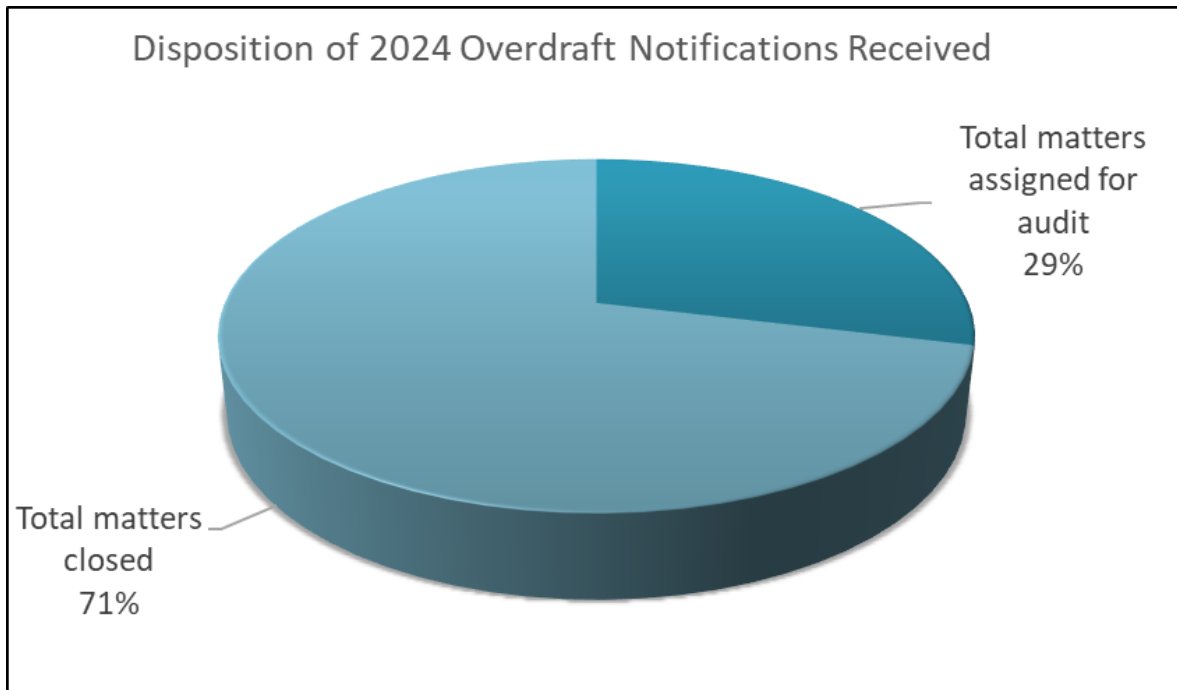


Figure 10

The OAE’s review of documented overdraft explanations from attorneys showed bank errors were the leading cause (32.8%) of trust account overdrafts closed in 2024, followed by law firm errors (29.8%). Regarding the 131 overdraft matters closed in 2024, the specific causes for overdrafts were generally categorized as follows:⁸

⁸ This “Other” designation is usually used in cases of fraud perpetrated against an attorney trust account or unusual circumstances that do not fall into one of the other categories.

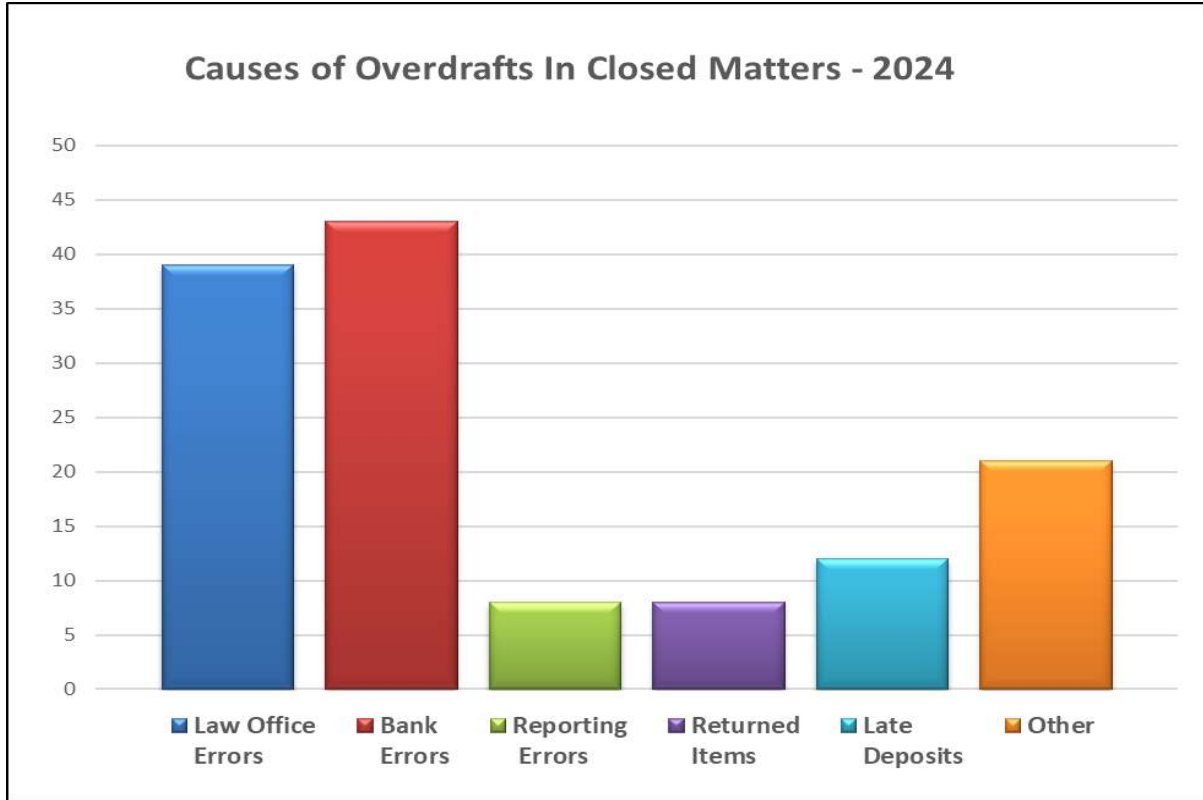


Figure 11

In 2024, fourteen attorneys received final discipline as the result of matters initiated by and/or discovered through the TAONP program. Of the fourteen attorneys disciplined, one attorney was disbarred, two attorneys received a term of suspension, two attorneys were censured, eight attorneys received a public reprimand, and one attorney received an admonition.

In addition, one attorney was placed on disability inactive status in 2024 as the result of medical issues discovered during a trust overdraft audit/investigation. The handling of these sensitive matters, including the empathetic recognition of the attorney's health issues, coupled with the mission of protecting the public, further underscores the value of the TAONP program.

Since 1985, when the OAE TAONP was first established, and through 2024, 295 attorneys have been disciplined as the result of overdraft investigations.

Of those disciplined, 116 attorneys were disbarred either by consent or via the disciplinary process.

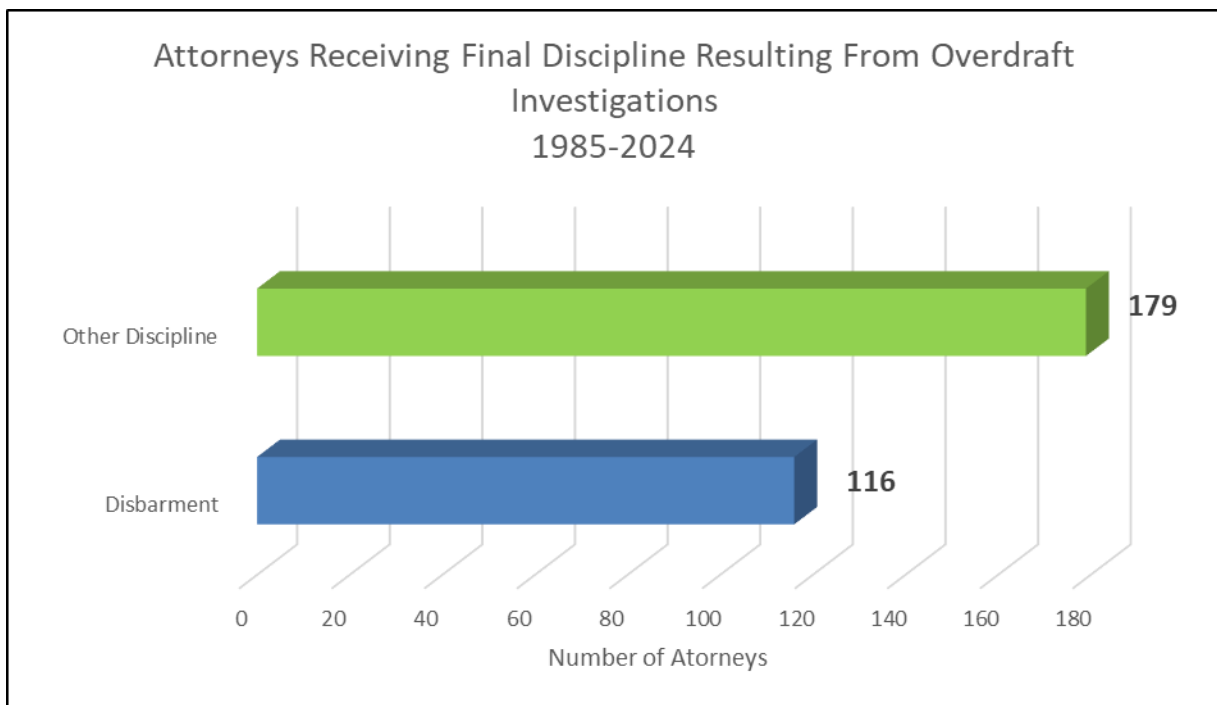


Figure 12

C. Education of the Bar

The OAE has always recognized the value of attorney education and training as a component of its protective mission. During 2024, ten OAE staff members presented twenty-six public educational programs to audiences including, but not limited to, the New Jersey State Bar Association, the New Jersey Association for Justice, the Essex, Morris, Mercer, Ocean, Somerset, and Union County Bar Associations, the South Asian Bar Association, the Asian Pacific American Lawyers Association of New Jersey, the New York City Bar Association, and Rutgers Law School.

Topics included guidelines for newly admitted attorneys, trust and business accounting for attorneys, overview of attorney regulation works in New Jersey, preparing for a random audit, professional courtesy, fee arbitration, and collaborative panels on mental health and professional courtesies.

Under its Approved Provider status, the OAE in 2024⁹ presented training to the members of the DEC's and DFACs totaling 1,915 minutes – or 38.3 credits – of free CLE credit to varied attorney audiences.

D. Education of the Volunteer Corps

The OAE is dedicated to providing meaningful training opportunities for both its volunteer and full-time staff. During 2024, education of the volunteer corps took two forms: recurring one-hour trainings and the customary OAE Training Conference full-day event.

This year, the DEC Unit, under the leadership of Statewide Coordinator Ryan J. Moriarty, launched a recurring 1-hour lunchtime training series for the volunteers which provided programming specifically tailored to the work of the volunteers as well as in their practice. The trainings included:

- Ethics & Artificial Intelligence
- What's next? Alternate Dispositions of Disciplinary Matters
- Making Your Case: Researching Attorney Discipline
- Eating an Elephant: How to write efficient and effective hearing panel reports
- Doing a 180: Efficient & Effective Investigations
- Recruitment 2024: Reinforcing the Strength of the DEC's
- RPCs for DEC's

The programs were well attended and provided additional, no cost CLE opportunities to the hard-working volunteers.

Further demonstrating this commitment, the OAE hosted its Fifteenth Annual Training Conference on October 23, 2024. This year's conference featured four distinct substantive programs alongside a concurrent session on Fee Arbitration. A total of 304 participants attended the online event, ensuring broad access and a comfortable virtual learning environment.

⁹ During preparation of this document, the OAE identified a typographic error in the 2023 Annual Report. The total number of minutes of CLE accomplished by OAE staff in 2023 was 1,550, not 3,240 as originally reported.

Associate Justice Rachel Wainer Apter delivered the keynote address, highlighting the vital role that nearly 900 volunteers play in maintaining the integrity of New Jersey's legal system. She underscored the unique, volunteer-driven nature of the state's disciplinary and fee arbitration systems and praised the dedication and fairness of volunteers in handling difficult cases

Justice Wainer Apter acknowledged recent improvements, including expanded wellness resources, diversion options, and a new readmission process for disbarred attorneys. On behalf of the Court, she expressed deep gratitude for the volunteers' commitment to fostering trust and confidence in the rule of law across New Jersey.

Following Justice Wainer Apter's thoughtful remarks, five targeted workshops addressed the specific training needs of individuals involved in the screening, investigation, prosecution, and adjudication of attorney disciplinary matters.

The first session, "Successful Handling of Pre-Hearing Motions," offered practical guidance on addressing litigation issues that may arise during disciplinary hearings. The presenters shared effective strategies for managing pre-hearing evidentiary concerns, helping ensure hearings proceed smoothly.

The second session, "Balancing Act: Supporting Clients with Mental Health Issues While Maintaining Your Own Well-Being," featured Dr. Katherine Stone, a nationally recognized expert. She provided actionable practices and strategies for self-care and professional ethics within the legal field.

The third workshop, "Effectively Handling Difficult Court System Users Within the Disciplinary System," was particularly timely and well received and offered valuable advice on engaging challenging court system users while upholding quality service and fairness in attorney discipline.

The fourth session, "DRB – Appellate Advocacy, Disciplinary System Overview, and Recent Case Updates," welcomed the newly appointed DRB Chair, the Honorable Mary Catherine Cuff, P.J.A.D. (Ret.), alongside Board counsel. They offered insights into best practices for appearing before the Board and highlighted significant recent disciplinary decisions.

Concurrent with the DRB presentation, Statewide Fee Arbitration Coordinator Darrell Felsenstein, together with Deputy Counsel Barry Petersen and representatives from the Fee Arbitration Committee, shared best practices with Fee Arbitration volunteers on effectively resolving fee disputes.

V. SUBTRACTING THAT WHICH IS NOT MISCONDUCT

Not every grievance against an attorney results in an investigation. Many cases are screened out of such consideration or are routed into the statewide Fee Arbitration Program. This section summarizes the filtering process and fee arbitration.

A. Grievances

The attorney disciplinary process usually begins with the filing of a grievance against an attorney. Grievances come from various sources, including clients, other attorneys, judges, and the OAE itself. On receipt of a grievance, the DEC Secretary or OAE screener applies the analysis of R. 1:20-3 to determine whether the matter should be docketed. In 2024, the OAE and the 18 District Ethics Committees received 2,925 unique grievances alleging misconduct by New Jersey attorneys.

The disciplinary system must decline for docketing any case in which the facts alleged, if true, do not constitute unethical conduct.

The disciplinary system will likewise decline for docketing any case in which the Court lacks jurisdiction over the attorney, instead routing that grievance to the appropriate jurisdiction. Similarly, allegations of improper advertising are routed to the Committee on Attorney Advertising for exclusive handling by that entity.

Cases involving pending civil and criminal litigation may be declined, unless in the opinion of the DEC secretary or Director, the facts alleged clearly demonstrate provable ethics violations or a substantial threat of imminent harm to the public. In all other situations, the case is declined with an invitation to the grievant to refile the grievance at the conclusion of the litigation.

Finally, a grievance may be declined where the allegations involve aspects of a substantial fee dispute. In such cases, the matter is generally referred to

a fee arbitration committee for consideration. Statewide, 1769 grievances (or 66.7%) were declined for docketing on one of those legal bases.

B. Fee Arbitration

The New Jersey Supreme Court has long recognized that disputes between clients and their attorneys are not always matters of ethics, but sometimes involve other issues linked to the reasonableness of the fee charged by the attorney in relation to the overall services rendered by that attorney. To assist in the resolution of these fee disagreements, the Supreme Court established a fee arbitration system, which relies on the services of volunteers (attorneys and non-attorney public members) serving on 17 DFACs. These volunteers screen and adjudicate fee disputes between clients and attorneys over the reasonableness of the attorney's fee.

The fee arbitration system was established in New Jersey in 1978. It was the second mandatory statewide program in the country, following Alaska. Fee arbitration offers clients and attorneys an inexpensive, fast, and confidential method of resolving fee disagreements. Even today, New Jersey remains one of only a handful of states with a mandatory statewide fee arbitration program.

New Jersey's Court Rules require that the attorney notify the client of the fee arbitration program's availability prior to bringing a lawsuit for the collection of fees. If the client chooses fee arbitration, the attorney must arbitrate the matter. For those matters that involve questions of ethics, in addition to the fee dispute, the ethics issues may still be addressed on the conclusion of the fee arbitration proceedings, and the OAE makes sure that both types of proceedings will proceed in a timely fashion.

The OAE Fee Arbitration Unit provides legal and administrative support to the 17 district fee secretaries and committees. For the 2023-2024 term, 282 DFAC members served the Supreme Court through this program (188 attorneys and 94 public members), serving pro bono.

1. Fee Arbitration Case Screening

New Jersey's fee arbitration program is a two-tiered system. The fee arbitration hearings are conducted before hearing panels of the 17 DFACs

(Figure 14), with appeals heard before the DRB. Only clients may initiate fee arbitration.

The Fee Arbitration process begins when a client submits a completed Attorney Fee Arbitration Request Form (AFARF), along with a \$50 administrative filing fee, to the district fee secretary of the DFAC. The DFAC secretary in the district where the attorney maintains an office will then screen the case to determine if the committee has jurisdiction.

Fee committees lack jurisdiction to arbitrate certain types of fees, including fees allowed by courts and statute, monetary damages for legal malpractice, and fees for legal services rendered by the Office of the Public Defender. They also may not consider any fee in which no attorney's services were rendered more than six years from the date on which the AFARF was received.

Fee committee secretaries also have the discretion to decline certain categories of case, at their option, including cases:

- affecting the interests of third parties;
- raising legal questions beyond the basic fee dispute;
- with a legal fee which is \$100,000 or more; and
- of a multi-jurisdictional character, where substantial services were not rendered in New Jersey.

If the DFAC Secretary determines that the committee has jurisdiction, and the Secretary does not elect to exercise discretionary authority to decline the case, the case will proceed to the response stage.

2. Fee Arbitration Process for Docketed Cases

The attorney whose fee is alleged to be unreasonable is afforded an opportunity to respond to the AFARF and to provide relevant supporting documents and records. The attorney may also join other affected law firms in the proceeding. Like the client, the attorney also must pay a \$50 administrative filing fee.

When both client and attorney have had the opportunity to respond in writing, the matter would be set down for a fee arbitration hearing.

Hearings are scheduled on at least ten days' written notice. There is no discovery. At that hearing, the attorney bears the burden of proving, by a preponderance of the evidence, that the fee charged is reasonable under the eight factors enumerated in RPC 1.5(a).

Following the hearing, the panel or single arbitrator prepares a written arbitration determination, with a statement of reasons annexed, to be issued within thirty days. The Rules provide for the parties to receive the Arbitration Determination from the district secretary within thirty days of the conclusion of the hearing.

The Court Rules allow a limited right of appeal to the DRB within 21 days of the Committee's written determination. All appeals are reviewed by the DRB on the record. The DRB's decision is final.

The decision of the DFAC in the form of the written Arbitration Determination (FAD) becomes final and binding on the parties. R. 1:20A-2(a).

3. *Volume*

In 2024, DFACs handled a total of 990 matters, including new cases filed and those that reached a disposition during that year. The committees began the year with 401 cases pending from 2023. During the year, 589 new matters were added. Figure 13. A total of 509 cases were disposed of, leaving a balance of 481 matters pending at year's end. At the conclusion of 2024, the average number of cases pending before each of the 17 Fee Committees was 28 cases per district.

The 589 new filings received in 2024 involved claims against roughly .6% of the active New Jersey attorney population (74,424). Those contested fees remain a very small percentage of the total attorney-client transactions.

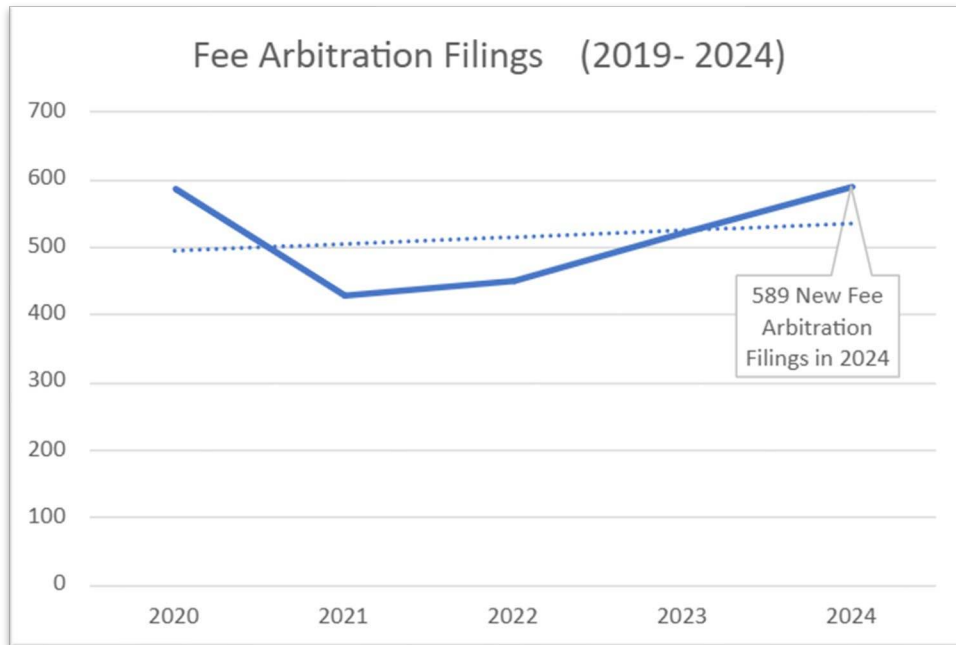


Figure 13

Concerning the value of cases resolved in fee arbitration, New Jersey’s DFACs arbitrated matters involving a total of more than \$6.4 million in legal fees during 2024. Some of those cases are resolved by the attorneys themselves before the client commences the process, with no further action needed by the Committee.

Of the cases that proceeded to a hearing, DFACs conducted 285 hearings during 2024, involving almost \$5.9 million in total attorneys’ fees charged. In 39% hearings), the hearing panels upheld the attorney fees in full. In the balance of 61.4% of the fee cases (175 hearings), the hearing panels reduced the attorney fees by a total of almost \$3.7 million, which represents 62.7% of the total billings subject to reduction (\$3.7 million out of the total of \$5.9 million subject to reduction).



Figure 14

For an overview of the amounts at issue, the 175 cases in which the attorney fee was reduced by the hearing panel may be broken into the following categories:

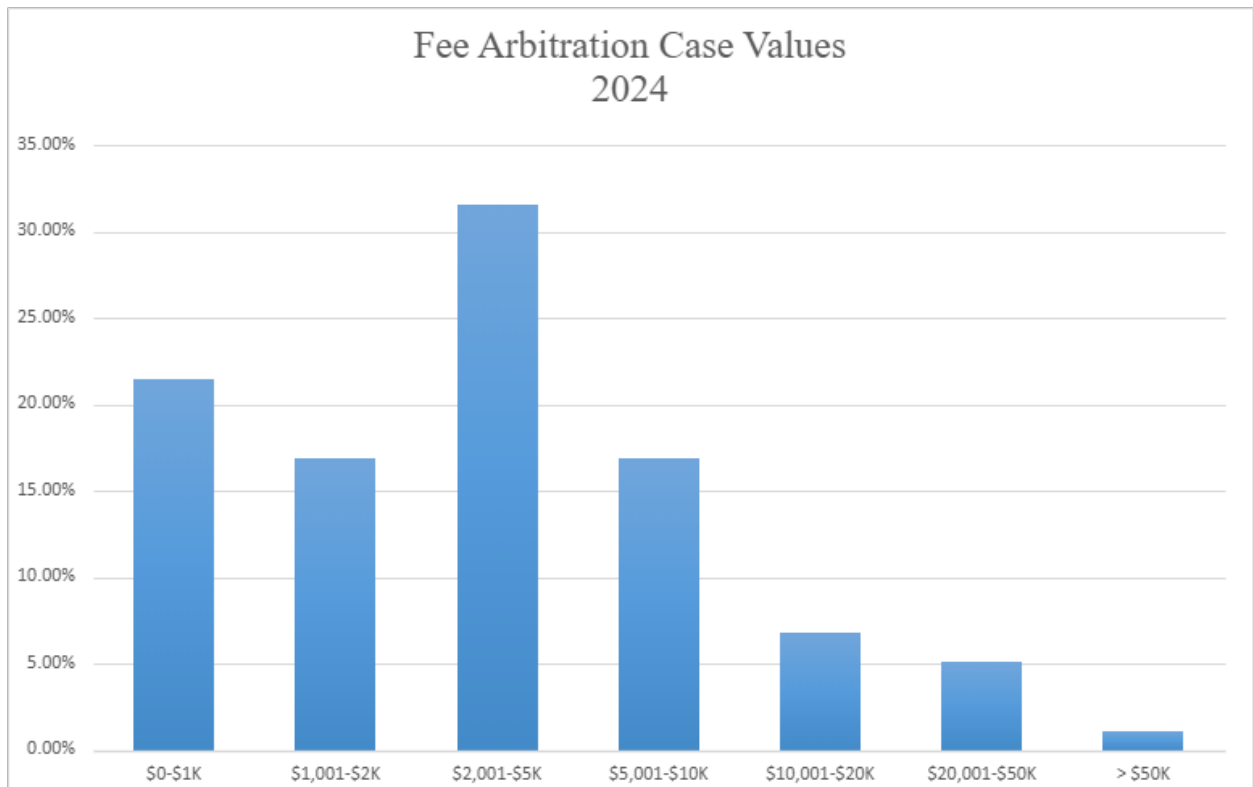


Figure 15

For all cases which proceeded to a hearing with a FAD issued by the DFAC, the average amount billed was \$20,552.91. The median amount billed was \$10,000. The average amount of the reductions in all cases which proceeded to a FAD was \$5,907.28 with a median reduction amount of \$2,857.50.

It should be noted that the parties reached settlement without a hearing in an additional 87 cases. The total fees at issue in the cases settled by the parties involved \$484,824.13 in attorney fees. The attorneys agreed to a reduction in fees without going to a hearing in 40 of those cases (45.9% of the total cases settled by stipulation).

Of the 509 cases that proceeded from file-opening to case-closing in calendar year 2024, 60% reached disposition in fewer than 180 days (305 out of 509 total cases). The DFACs resolved 7 more cases in that interval than during the preceding calendar year, when 298 cases out of a total caseload of 511 were resolved in under 180 days. The data for 2024 shows that the committees resolved one more case overall than during the preceding calendar year. One hundred-twenty-five (123) of the total cases

resolved during 2024 were resolved within 60 days of filing. For 2023, 115 cases were resolved that quickly.

4. *Fee Arbitration Case Types*

The categories of legal services for which clients seek fee arbitration highlight the importance of the fee arbitration system in particular practice areas. The system has proven to be a very effective and efficient method for resolving attorney fee disputes, while avoiding litigation between the parties as to the fee dispute.

Over the past five years, family actions (including matrimonial, support and custody cases) consistently have generated the most fee disputes (38.1%) on average. Criminal matters (including indictable, quasi-criminal and municipal court cases) ranked second in frequency (15.2%). Third place was filled by General Litigation at 11.1%. Estate/Probate at 6% came in fourth place, and Real Estate, at 5.2%, came in fifth place. The overall filings fit into an additional 20 legal practice areas.

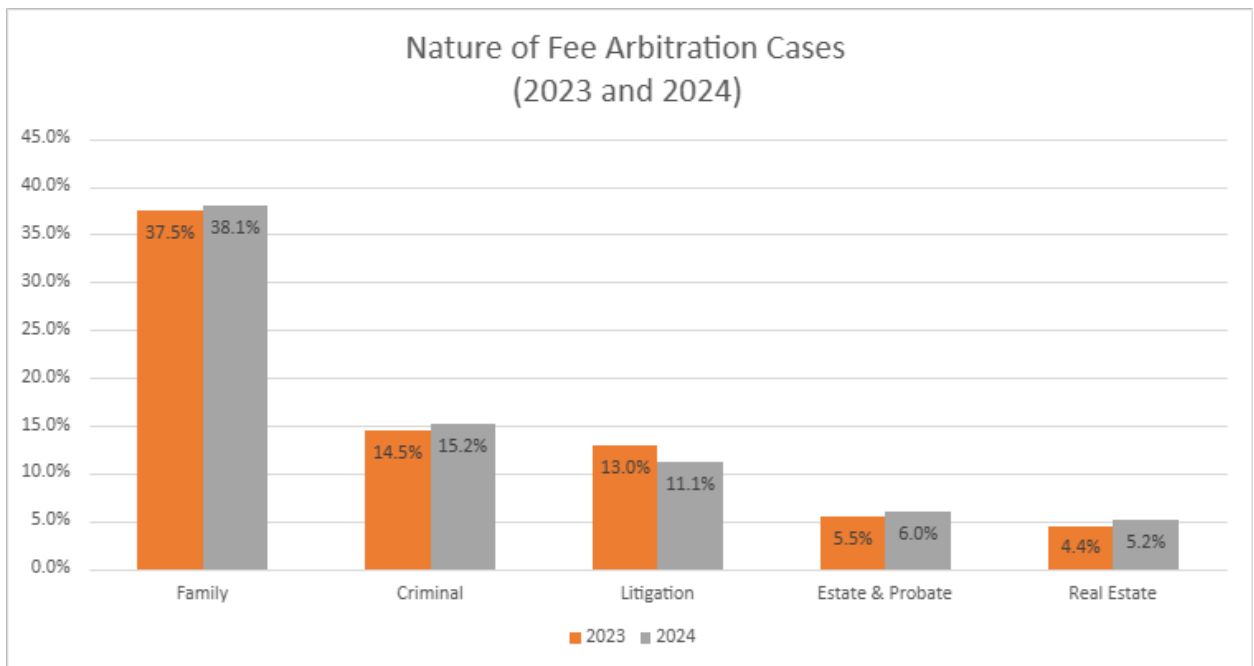


Figure 16

5. *Enforcement*

Either party may record a FAD as a judgment under the process described in R. 4:6-7.¹⁰

Additionally, the OAE's Fee Arbitration Unit follows up when a client reports that he or she has not been paid by the attorney the full amount of the refund owed, as set forth by the FAD or a stipulation of settlement. This follow-up has been required in 20 to 30 cases per year, over the past five years. The OAE issues a warning letter if the attorney has not paid the full amount of the fee award within the 30-day payment period. If the attorney thereafter does not send payment in full to the client within the 10-day period specified in the warning letter, the OAE may file a motion for the temporary suspension of the attorney. Such motions are heard by the DRB, which sends any recommendation of temporary suspension to the Supreme Court. Eleven (11) of those cases were the subject of oral argument before the Board in 2024.

The Supreme Court has ordered an average of nine (9) attorneys to be temporarily suspended each year, over the past five years, as a result of such motions, with the attorneys' terms of suspension continued until they submitted proof of payment in full to the clients, along with the payment of any additional monetary sanction relating to the costs of the enforcement proceedings. In 2024, the OAE filed 18 enforcement motions relating to fee arbitration cases.

C. Disability-Inactive Status

As a result of its unique responsibilities, the OAE is sometimes exposed to sensitive information concerning an attorney's inability to practice law. The Court offers attorneys the opportunity to place their license to practice law into "Disability-Inactive Status" (DIS). This status is appropriate where an attorney lacks the mental or physical capacity to practice law. R. 1:20-12.

¹⁰ For more information on this process, see Superior Court of New Jersey, "Collecting a Money Judgment" (July 1, 2022) (viewable at: https://www.njcourts.gov/sites/default/files/forms/10282_collect_money_jdgmnt.pdf).

It is important to appreciate that DIS is, by itself, non-disciplinary in nature. However, consistent with the constitutional mandate imposed upon the OAE to protect the public and maintain confidence in the bar, the OAE is responsible for ensuring every attorney who holds a license to practice law possesses the physical and mental ability to do so.

An attorney may voluntarily place their license into DIS. However, unfortunately, the need for an attorney to enter into such a status is sometimes identified for the first time after a grievance has been docketed. In such cases, the OAE consents to the respondent's entry into DIS.

Still other circumstances present where an attorney is unwilling or unable to consent to transfer to DIS. In those limited circumstances, the OAE will petition the DRB for the attorney to be evaluated consistent with R. 1:20-12. If the petition is granted, the attorney will undergo an evaluation for purposes of determining whether DIS is appropriate. If so, the OAE will request the placement of the attorney on DIS.

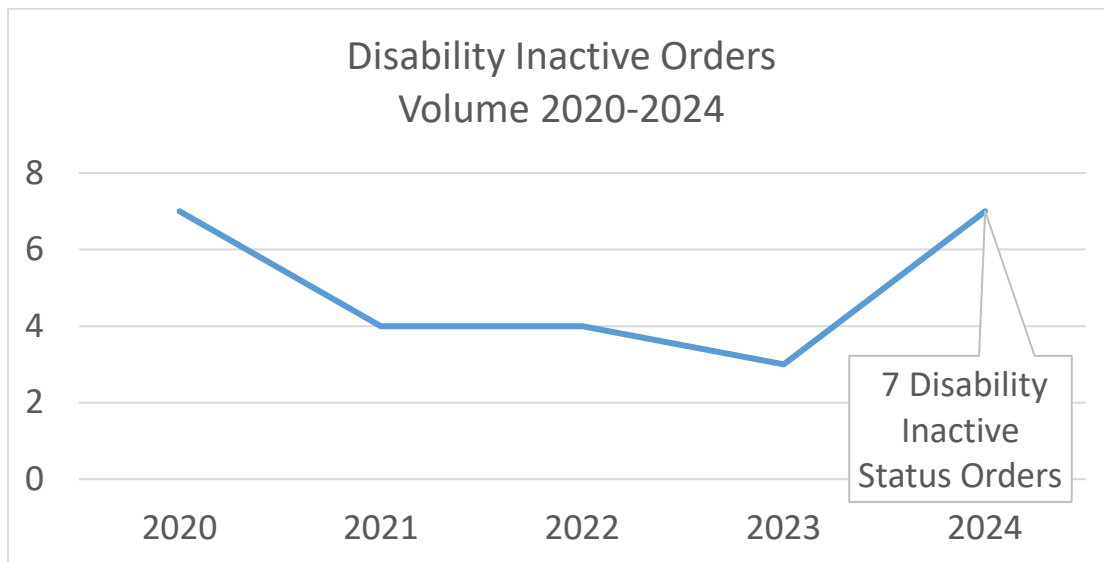


Figure 17

During 2024, a total of seven (7) attorneys were the subject of a DIS Order.

DIS is not permanent. Should an attorney regain the ability to practice law, the attorney may petition to return to the practice of law. The availability of DIS received continuing attention during 2024 as a result of the Court's wellness initiatives.

VI. DISCIPLINARY INVESTIGATIONS

As reviewed above, the central responsibility of the OAE and the DEC's is to determine the truth of alleged wrongs by attorneys. This is accomplished via thorough and complete investigations by professional staff and the DEC volunteer corps as supported by the OAE's DEC Unit.

A. Volume

Docketed grievances are assigned for investigation to determine whether unethical conduct may have occurred and, if so, whether there is sufficient evidence to prove the charges to the standard of clear and convincing evidence. Investigations include communicating with the respondent-attorney, the grievant, and any necessary witnesses, as well as securing necessary records and documents. Pursuant to R. 1:20-9(b), all disciplinary investigations are confidential.

At the conclusion of the investigative process, a determination is made regarding whether there is adequate proof of unethical conduct. If there is no reasonable prospect of proving unethical conduct to the requisite standard, the matter is dismissed.

Overall, the disciplinary system (OAE and DEC's) began 2024 with a total of 815 investigations carried over from prior years. During the year, 898 new investigations were added, for a total disposable caseload of 1,713. A total of 964 investigations were completed and disposed of, leaving a total of 751 pending investigations at year's end. Of that number, 98 were in untriable status, leaving an active pending investigative caseload of 653 matters.

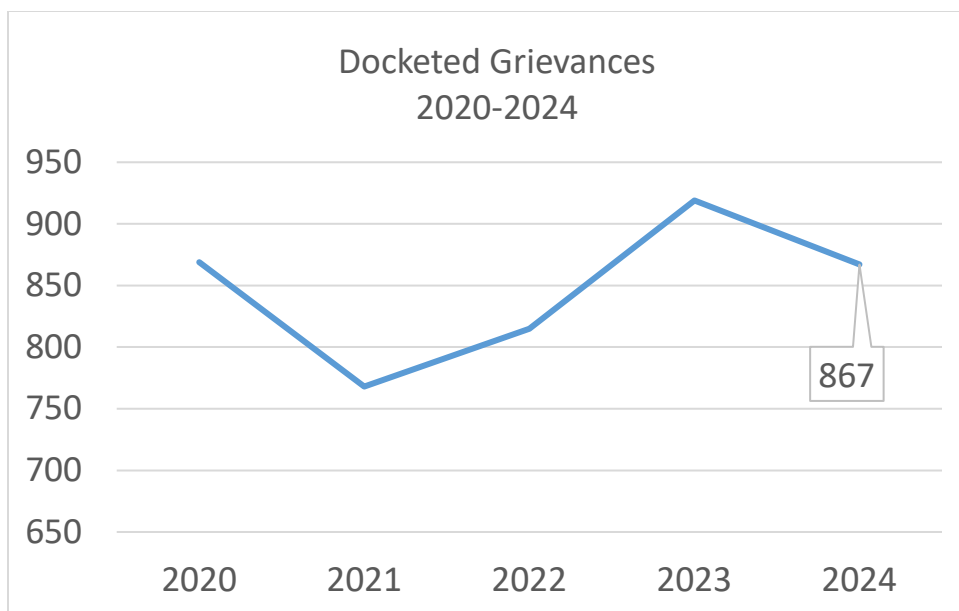


Figure 18

The number of attorneys against whom grievances are docketed for investigation is generally a very small percentage of the total lawyer population. In 2024, only 1.16% of the 74,428 active lawyers¹¹ as of December 31, 2024 had grievances docketed against them. **(Figure 18).**

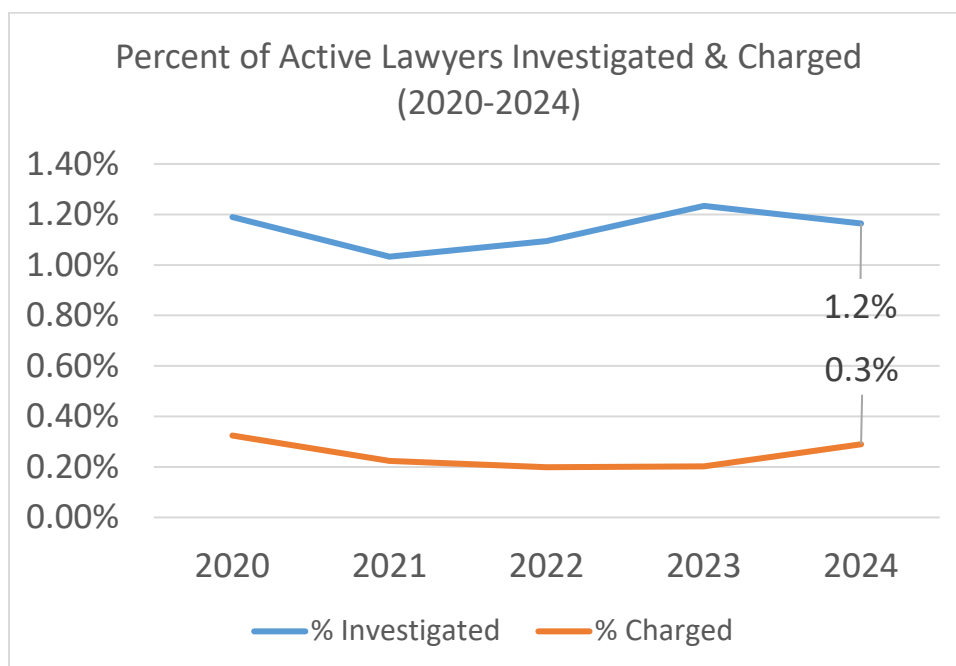


Figure 19

¹¹ Source: New Jersey Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection

B. Time Goals

The New Jersey Supreme Court has established time goals for the thorough and fair completion of all disciplinary investigations and hearings. R. 1:20-8. That Rule contemplates that the disciplinary system will endeavor to complete complex investigations within nine months and standard investigations within six months. Complex cases are almost invariably assigned to the professional staff of the OAE, with standard complexity matters referred to the DEC's for evaluation.

During 2024, the OAE averaged a 77% time goal compliance rate, up 8 percentage points compared with last year.¹² This was the highest time goal compliance percentage since 2018. The District Ethics Committees' yearly average time goal compliance for 2024 was 52%, up 3 percentage points from 2023.

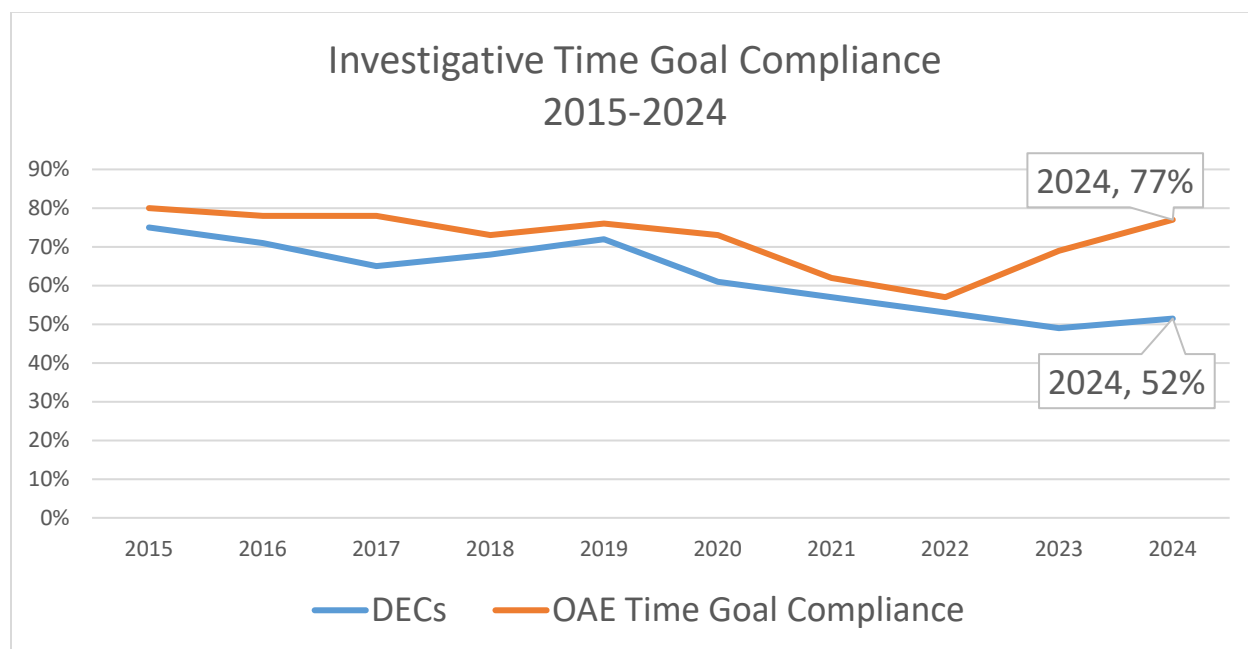


Figure 20

¹² Time goal compliance was under-reported in the 2023 annual report at 65%, when in fact the rate was more favorable at 69%.

During 2024, the average age of the OAE’s pending investigations was 201 days, down 53 days (-20.8%) when compared with 2023. The average age of the Ethics Committees’ pending investigations was 218 days, down 18 days (7.6%) when compared with 2023.

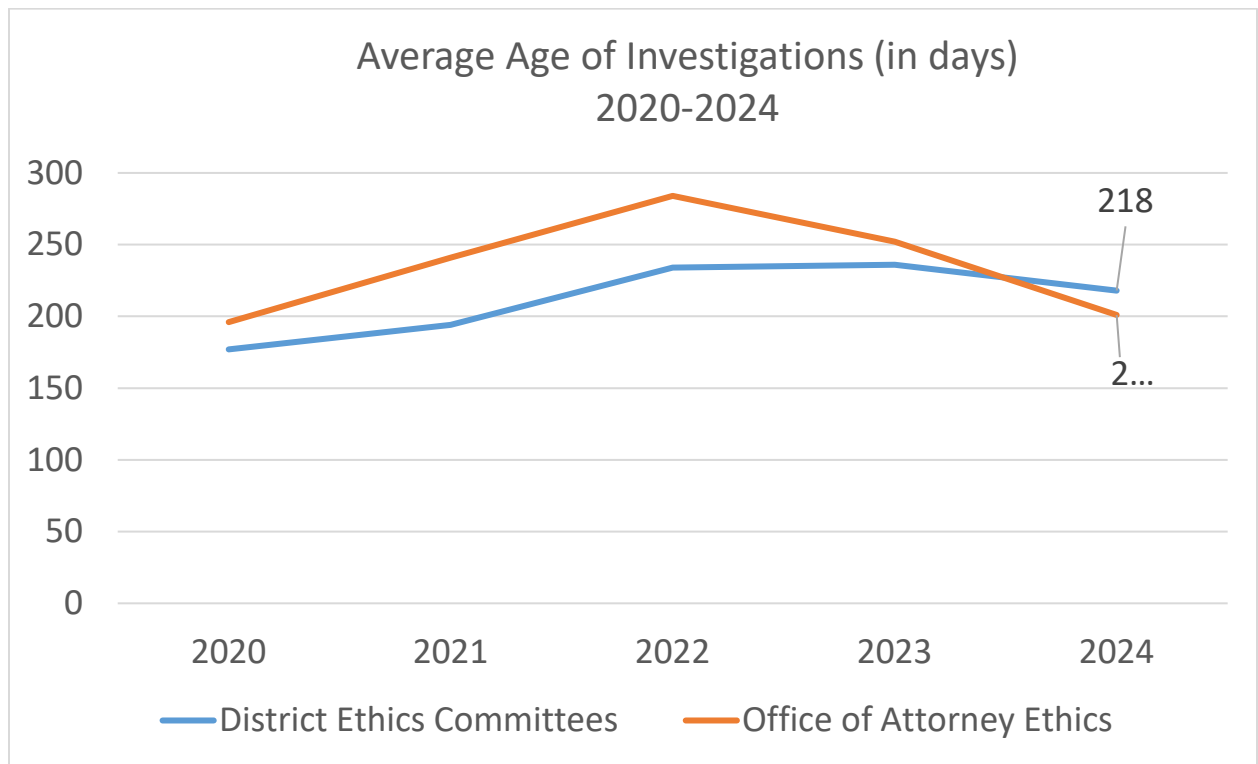


Figure 21

VII. AGREEMENTS IN LIEU OF DISCIPLINE ("DIVERSION")

Not all misconduct substantiated to the standard of "clear and convincing evidence" results in attorney discipline.

Instead, in 1996, the Court created "diversion," a non-disciplinary outcome available for only "minor unethical conduct." "Minor unethical conduct" is misconduct that would likely warrant no more than an admonition (the least serious sanction) if the matter proceeded to a hearing.

In such cases, DEC's and the OAE may use an "agreement in lieu of discipline" to direct the handling of the case out of the disciplinary system and into the diversion program. Determinations to divert matters of minor unethical conduct are made solely by the OAE Director. A grievant is given ten days' notice to comment prior to the OAE Director's final decision to divert the case, but a grievant cannot appeal the Director's final diversion decision.

Diversion may take place only if the attorney acknowledges the misconduct and agrees to take remedial steps to assure future compliance with the Rules. The primary purpose of diversion is education and the productive resolution of disputes between clients and attorneys outside of the disciplinary process. It permits the disciplinary system to focus resources on the most serious cases. Diversion conditions generally do not exceed six months in duration. If successfully completed, the underlying grievance is dismissed with no record of discipline. If diversion is unsuccessful, a disciplinary complaint is filed and prosecuted.

The Court announced an amendment to the diversion Rule on May 12, 2024. As amended, the Rule requires disciplinary agency members to consider diversion in all cases involving a finding of minor unethical conduct. In addition, in appropriate circumstances, the amendment now allows individuals to enter the diversion program after the issuance of a formal disciplinary complaint. Previously, that had been prohibited.

During calendar year 2024, a total of 94 matters were approved for diversion, a 23.7% increase over 2023. Three of those matters were approved for diversion after a formal disciplinary complaint.

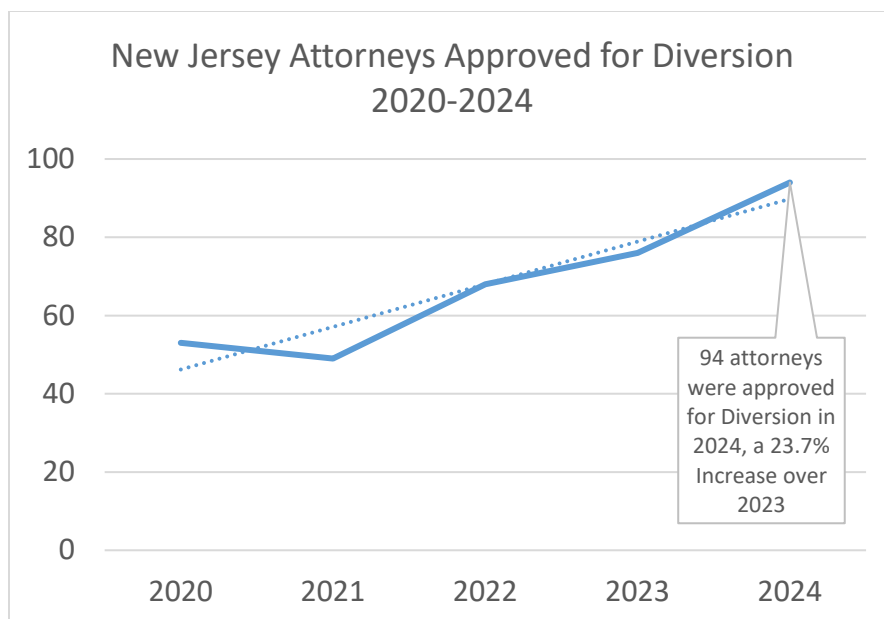


Figure 22

During 2024, New Jersey attorneys successfully completed 79 diversions.

At the end of 2024, 43 diverted cases were still pending; those attorneys had been admitted into the diversion program in 2024 and prior years but had not yet completed their obligations.

The majority of individuals approved for diversion, or 39%, had violated attorney financial recordkeeping Rules.

The condition most commonly imposed in diversion cases required the attorney to complete the New Jersey State Bar Association's Ethics Diversionary Education Course (93). Other required conditions included: completion of a course in New Jersey Trust and Business Accounting (51), and completion of other Continuing Legal Education programs (9).

VIII. SUBSTANTIATED CASES WHICH ARE NOT MINOR

When the OAE or a DEC develops clear and convincing proof of unethical conduct which is not minor, the Rules require the filing of formal and public disciplinary charges. Most frequently, this occurs by way of complaint.

Complaints are served upon the attorney-respondent, who has 21 days in which to file a verified answer. Once a formal complaint or other charging document (such as a motion or consent) is filed, the complaint and any other document filed thereafter become public (with minor limitations) but may be subject to protective orders, as applicable.

Once the attorney files a verified conforming answer, a disciplinary hearing is scheduled and held.

In both standard and complex cases, the matter is tried before a hearing panel consisting of three members, composed of two lawyers and one public member. In some complex cases, however, a special ethics master may be appointed by the Supreme Court to hear and decide the matter.

In disciplinary hearings, the procedure followed is similar to that in Superior Court trials. A verbatim record of the entire proceeding is made. Testimony is taken under oath. Attendance of witnesses and the production of records may be compelled by subpoena. After the conclusion of the hearing, the panel or special ethics master deliberates and prepares a hearing report either dismissing the complaint, if it determines that the lawyer has not committed unethical conduct, or finding the lawyer to have committed unethical conduct, with the recommendation of the level of discipline.

All hearings are open to the public except in rare circumstances where comprehensive protective orders have been entered. During 2024, a majority disciplinary hearings proceeded virtually utilizing the Zoom platform. The OAE publishes a list of pending hearing matters that are updated monthly and made available on the OAE's website.

A. Volume of Formal Disciplinary Complaints

The disciplinary system began calendar year 2024 with a total of 213 complaints carried over from prior years. During the year, 216 new complaints were added, for a total disposable caseload of 430. A total of 199

complaints were disposed, leaving 231 gross pending complaints at year's end. Of that number, 35 were in untriable status, leaving an active pending caseload of 196 complaints.

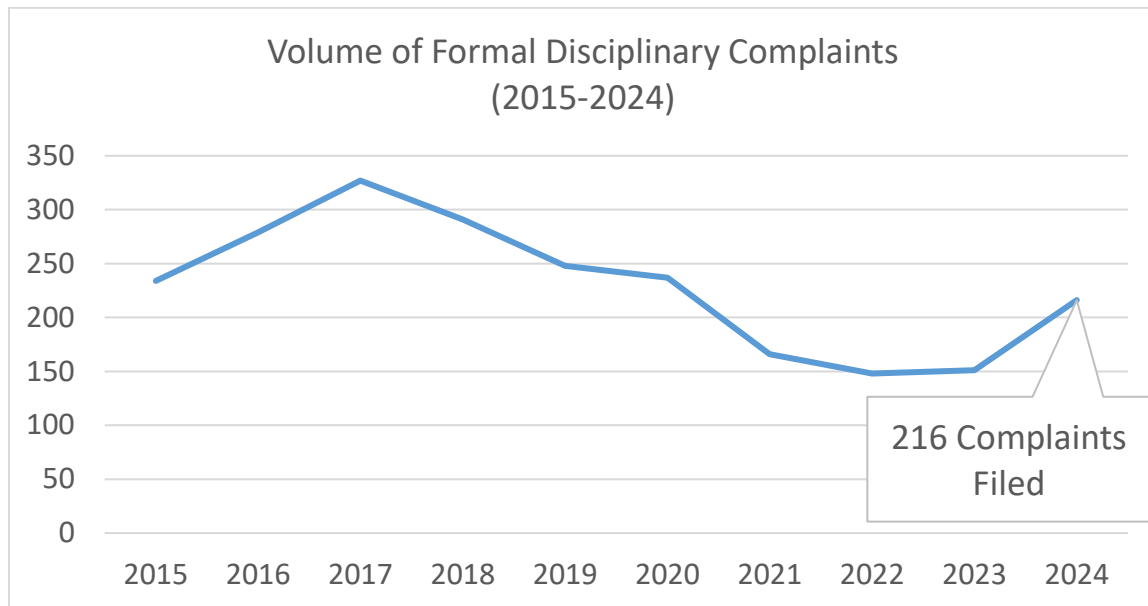


Figure 23

Evaluating that data as a percentage of the active attorney population, 0.3% of the population of active New Jersey attorneys was the subject of a disciplinary complaint in 2024, or three out of every one thousand attorneys.

B. Age of Disposed Hearings

In 2024, the average age of the OAE's disposed hearings decreased by 73 days, from 570 days in 2023 to 497 days in 2024. The average age of the disposed hearings of the DEC's decreased by 12 days, from 622 days in 2023 to 610 days in 2024.

OAE executive management attributes this continuing decrease in disposed hearing age to effective OAE staffing levels and the talented leadership within the DEC's.

IX. SANCTIONS

There are two ways in which the Supreme Court may sanction an attorney. The first type of sanction is a temporary suspension imposed as a result of emergent action. The second, and more common type of sanction, is final discipline. Final discipline is imposed as described by Rule. 1:20-15A.

A. Types of Final Discipline

There were five primary forms of final disciplinary sanctions in our state during 2024.

Disbarment is the most severe form of discipline and may be imposed either by the Supreme Court after oral argument or with the respondent's consent. From 1979 through 2024, disbarment was permanent in New Jersey. In re Wilson, 81 N.J. 451, 456 n.5 (1979); R. 1:20-15A(a)(1).

On June 7, 2022, the Court issued an opinion and Order in In re Wade, 250 N.J. 581, which set the stage for revisiting permanent disbarment. Shortly after issuing the Wade disbarment order, the Supreme Court appointed a Special Committee on the Duration of Disbarment for Knowing Misappropriation chaired by former Associate Justice Virginia A. Long (retired). On July 3, 2024, that committee issued its findings in a formal report to the Court.

After weighing the Committee's report, on October 15, 2024, the New Jersey Supreme Court enacted a significant policy change through administrative determinations and new Rule 1:20-21A ("Readmission After Disbarment"). That Rule allows disbarred attorneys to apply for reinstatement to the Bar after a minimum of five years before the Attorney Regulatory Board.

Suspension precludes an attorney from practicing law for the period it is in effect. An attorney may not resume practicing at the end of the suspension until the Supreme Court orders reinstatement. There are two types of suspensions. Term suspensions prevent an attorney from practicing for a specific term, usually between three months to three years. R. 1:20-15A(a)(3). Indeterminate suspensions are imposed for a minimum of five years. R. 1:20-15A(a)(2).

Censure is a condemnation of the attorney’s misconduct that is imposed by Order of the Supreme Court. R. 1:20-15A(a)(4).

A **reprimand** is a rebuke for an attorney’s unethical conduct. R. 1:20-15A(a)(5).

Admonition, the least serious sanction, is a written admonishment meted out either by letter of the DRB or by Order of the Supreme Court. R. 1:20-15A(a)(6).

In 2024, the Supreme Court imposed final discipline on 122 New Jersey attorneys. The 122 final disciplinary sanctions imposed included 15 disbarment Orders, of which 6 occurred by consent of respondent; 32 term suspensions; two indeterminate suspensions; 23 censures; 33 reprimands; and 18 admonitions.

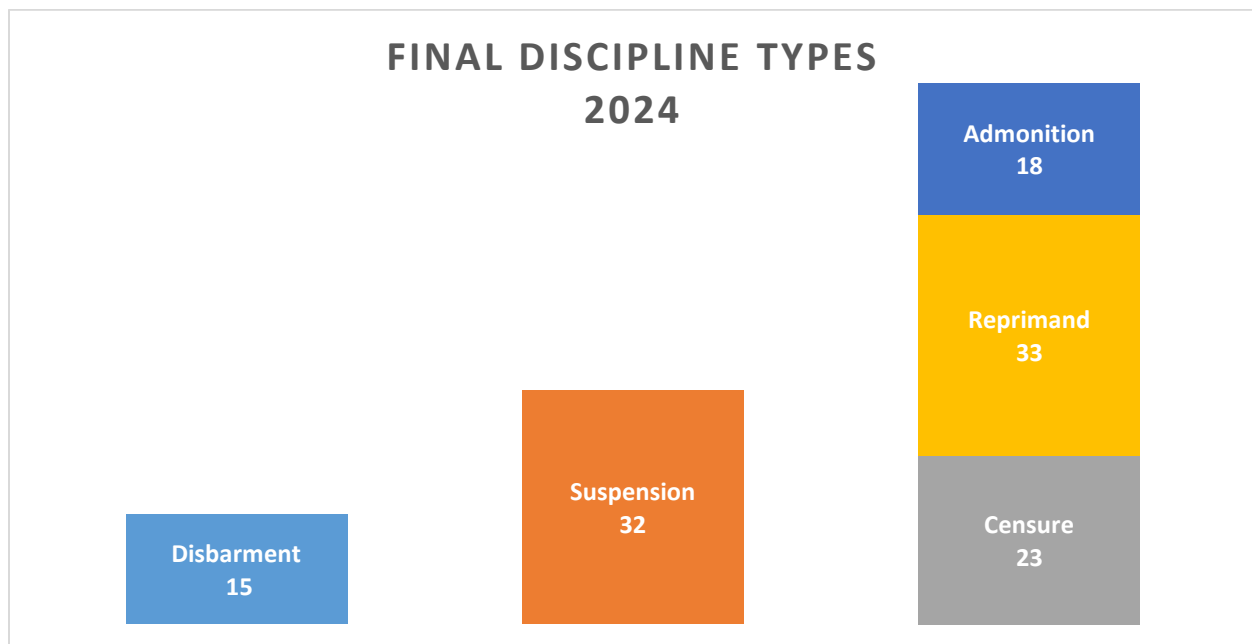


Figure 24

Comparisons of 2024 sanctions with the prior year are as follows: disbarments by Order of the Supreme Court following litigation increased by 80% (9 in 2024 vs. 5 in 2023); disbarments by consent decreased by 14.3% (6 in 2024 vs. 7 in 2023); term and indeterminate suspensions increased by 28% (32 in 2024 vs. 25 in 2023); censures were in equipoise, with 23 censures

imposed in both years; reprimands remained comparatively level with a 3.1% increase (33 in 2024 vs. 32 in 2023); and admonitions increased by 80.0% (18 in 2024 vs. 10 in 2023).

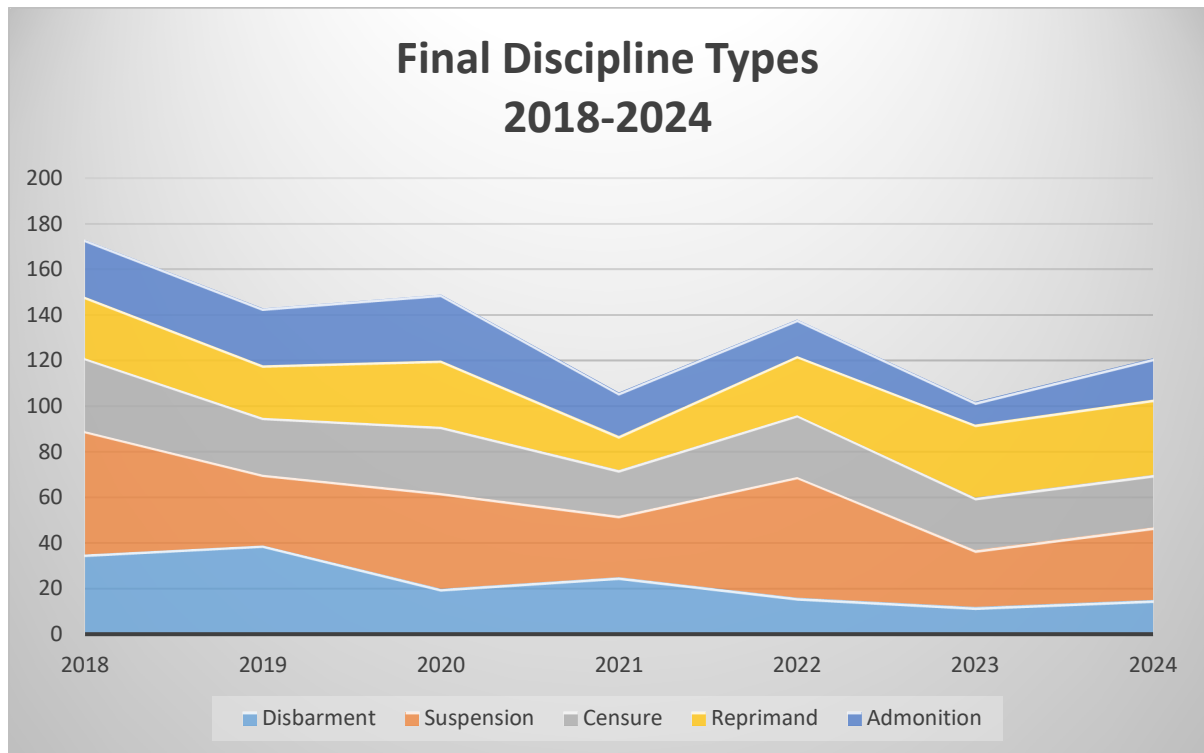


Figure 25

B. Emergent Action

Whenever an investigation has revealed both that a serious violation of the RPCs has occurred, and that an attorney “poses a substantial threat of serious harm to an attorney, a client or the public” (R. 1:20-11), the OAE may file an application seeking the attorney’s immediate temporary suspension from practice, pending ongoing investigation. If the Supreme Court determines to grant the motion, the Court may either suspend the attorney temporarily or impose a temporary license restriction, which permits the lawyer to continue to practice, but places conditions on that privilege. Conditions may include oversight by a proctor of the attorney and/or trust account.

Over the last five years, an average of 20 lawyers were subject to emergent action.

For 2024, a total of nineteen (19) attorneys were the subject of emergent sanctions as a result of 19 separate temporary suspension Orders. The names of attorneys emergently suspended are listed in Table 9.

In 2024, the leading reasons for emergent suspension were: the attorney’s conviction of a “serious crime” as defined in R. 1:20-13 at 37.5% (9 cases); non-cooperation with disciplinary authorities, at 41.6% (10 cases); and non-payment of fee arbitration committee awards at 16.6% (4 cases).

C. Total Disciplinary Sanctions

In total, the New Jersey Supreme Court entered 141 sanction Orders in 2024, by comparison with 126 Orders in 2023 (representing an increase of 19.6%). The 2024 sanctions are roughly equivalent to the five-year average of 141.8 sanctions per year.

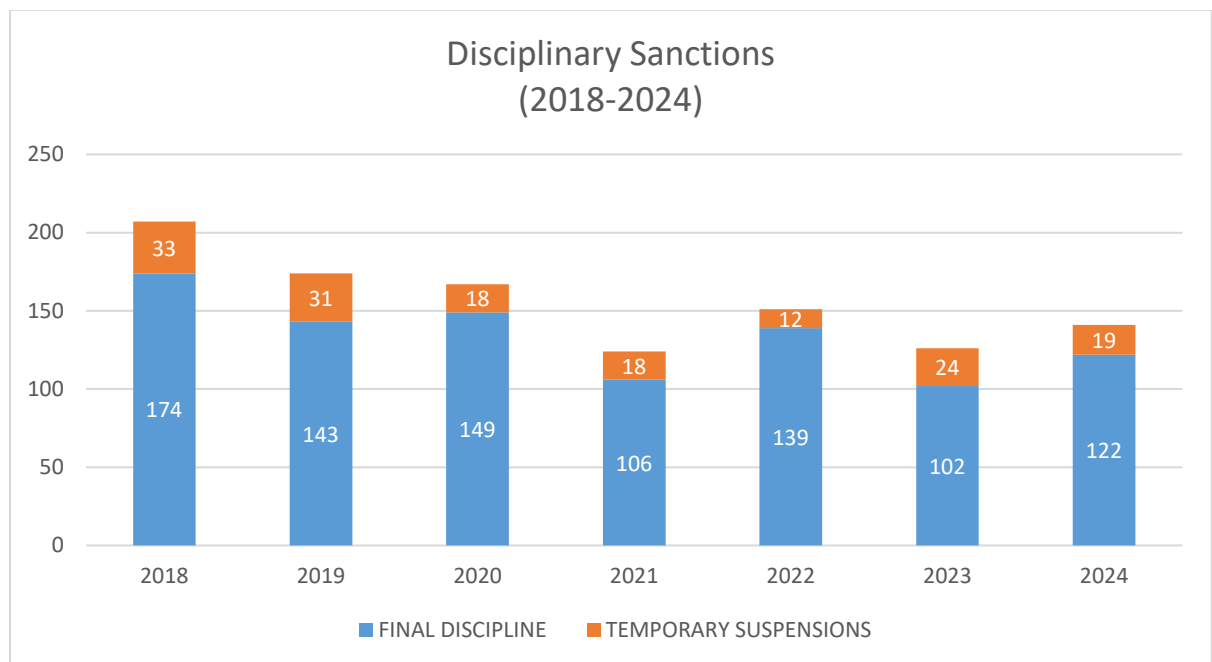


Figure 26

X. GROUNDS FOR FINAL DISCIPLINE

Over the years, the OAE consistently has studied the types of misconduct committed in final discipline cases. Many cases charge an individual respondent with a violation of more than one RPC. For the purposes of this analysis, the OAE selects the RPC with the most serious disciplinary consequence in each case.

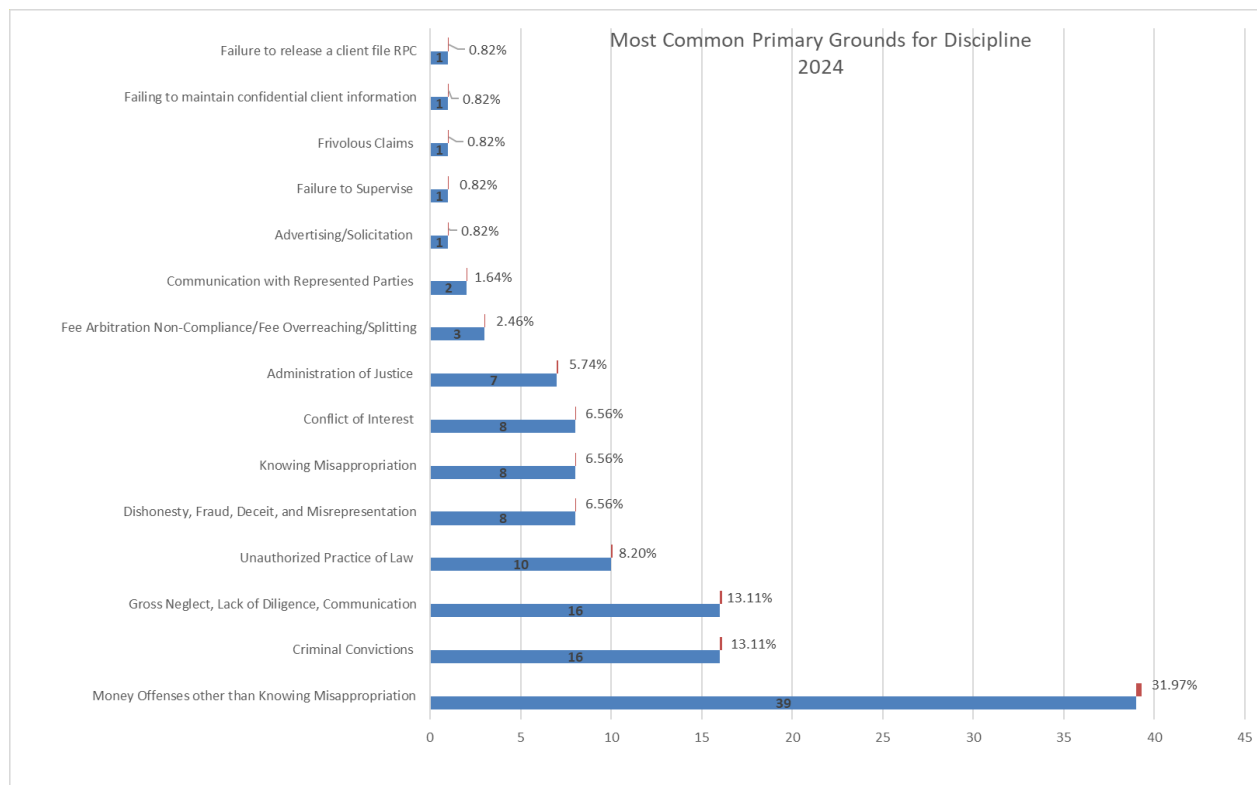


Figure 27

During 2024, 32% (39 of the 122 final discipline cases) of the attorneys disciplined in 2024 committed some type of money offense other than knowing misappropriation. This category includes negligent or reckless misappropriation, serious trust account recordkeeping deficiencies, and failure to safeguard funds and escrow violations. Financial related matters are consistently the most common and recurring cause of attorney discipline.

Summaries of each of the 122 final discipline cases can be found in the Appendix.

XI. AFTER DISCIPLINE: MONITORING, REINSTATEMENT & READMISSION

Finally, the OAE continues its attorney regulatory and disciplinary role after final discipline is imposed. Particularly, the OAE monitors attorneys' compliance with conditions of final discipline; can initiate civil contempt proceedings in the event an attorney fails to comply with a suspension or disbarment Order; and opines on the propriety of petitions for reinstatement to the practice of law following the suspension of an attorney's license to practice law.

A. Monitoring Conditions of Final Discipline

Rule 1:20-15A(b) describes the Supreme Court's authority to impose conditions, either as a component of a disciplinary sanction or as a condition precedent to reinstatement. Included among those conditions is the capacity of the Court to impose a proctorship, as described in R. 1:20-18.

Another typical condition is the submission of an annual or quarterly audit report covering attorney trust and business records. Sometimes random periodic drug testing at the attorney's expense is imposed. Finally, some attorneys are required to take ethics or substantive law courses. As of December 31, 2024, sixty-three (63) attorneys were subject to monitoring.

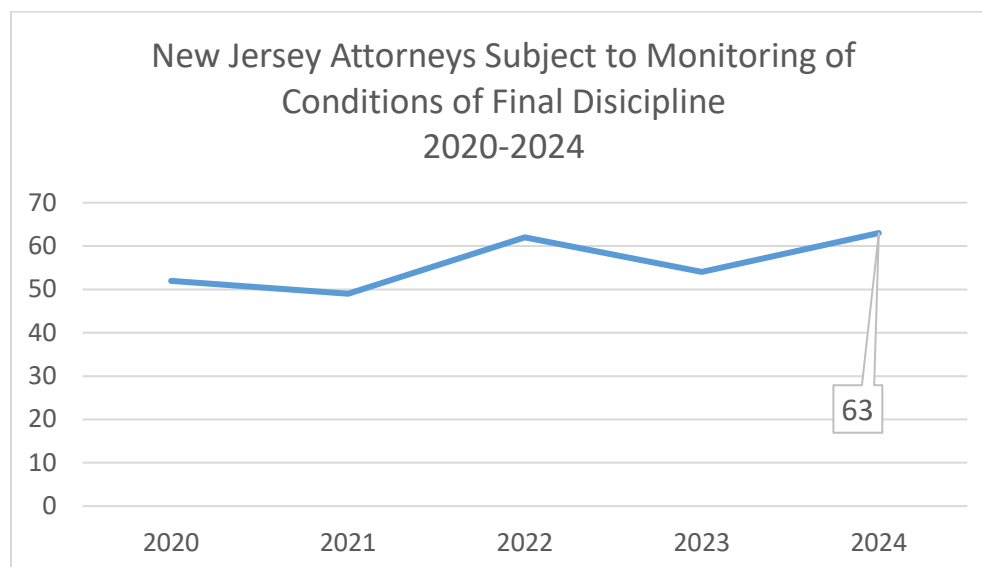


Figure 28

This represents a decrease of 12.9% in the number of attorneys subject to monitoring at the end of 2024. The OAE filed two Petitions to Compel Compliance with the Supreme Court in 2024.

B. Contempt

Prosecutions for contempt of Supreme Court Orders under R. 1:20-16(j) is another category of cases entrusted to the OAE. These actions involve the improper, continued practice of law by suspended and disbarred attorneys. The OAE is permitted by Rule to file and prosecute an action for contempt before the Assignment Judge of the vicinage where the respondent engaged in the prohibited practice of law. It also has the authority to file disciplinary complaints against offending attorneys seeking sanctions for their violations. There were no prosecutions for contempt of Supreme Court Orders in 2024.

C. Reinstatement Proceedings

A suspended attorney may not practice again until the attorney first files a petition for reinstatement, pursuant to R. 1:20-21, and the Supreme Court grants the request by Order. The application is reviewed by the OAE, the DRB, and the Court. Where the attorney is suspended for more than six months, a reinstatement petition may not be made until after expiration of the period provided in the suspension Order. R. 1:20-21(a). Where the suspension is for six months or less, the attorney may file a petition and publish the required public notice 40 days prior to the expiration of the suspension period. R. 1:20-21(b).

On October 15, 2024, the New Jersey Supreme Court enacted a significant policy change through new Rule 1:20-21A (“Readmission After Disbarment”), which allows disbarred attorneys to apply for reinstatement to the Bar after a minimum of five years. This landmark procedural reform is the first opportunity in 45 years for New Jersey’s disbarred attorneys to seek readmission. Alongside this rule change, the Court also created the Attorney Regulatory Board, which is now responsible for reviewing and making decisions on readmission petitions. As a prerequisite to readmission, a disbarred attorney must first pass the New Jersey bar examination. The first opportunities for disbarred attorneys to sit for the examination are February and July 2025, and successful candidates may petition for readmission within a year after receiving a passing score.

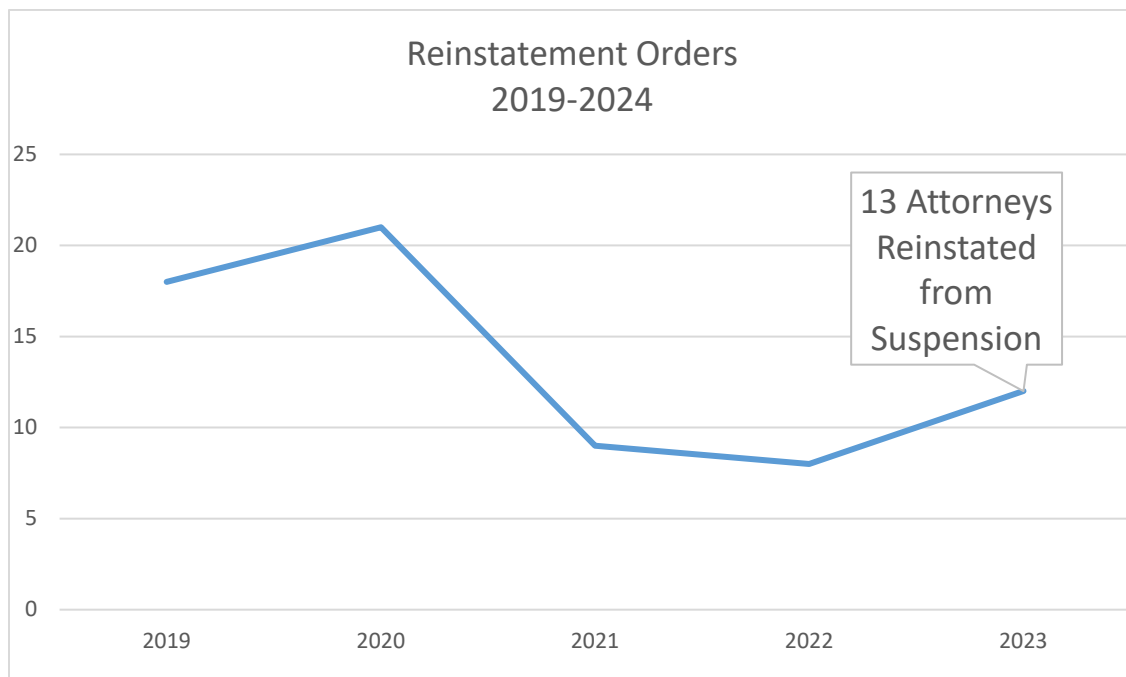


Figure 29

The Supreme Court reinstated thirteen (13) suspended attorneys in 2024.

Table 1

District Ethics Committee Officers as of September 1, 2024		
CHAIR	VICE CHAIR	SECRETARY
District I - Atlantic, Cape May, Cumberland and Salem Counties		
Stephanie Albrecht-Pedrick, Esq.	Scott D. Sherwood, Esq.	Dorothy F. McCrosson, Esq.
District IIA – Bergen – North		
Kathleen Ann Hart, Esq.	Louis J. Lamantia, Esq.	Joseph A. Maurice, Esq.
District IIB - Bergen County – South		
Michelle J. Marose, Esq.	Natalia Rawan Angeli, Esq.	William Tellado, Esq.
District IIIA - Ocean County		
Lauren Murray Dooley, Esq.	Kathleen C. Moriarty, Esq.	Steven Secare, Esq.
District IIIB - Burlington County		
Megan Knowlton Balne, Esq.	Anne Robbins Myers, Esq.	John M. Hanamirian, Esq.
District IV - Camden and Gloucester Counties		
Daniel Q. Harrington, Esq.	Anne T. Picker, Esq.	John M. Palm, Esq.
District VA - Essex County – Newark		
Dale Edward Barney, Esq.	John Charles Garde, Esq.	Paula I. Getty, Esq.
District VB - Essex County - Suburban Essex		
Joseph A. Fischetti, Esq.	Jason R. Halpin, Esq.	Paula I. Getty, Esq.
District VC - Essex County - West Essex		
Mark H. Friedman, Esq.	Mark S. Heinzelmann, Esq.	Paula I. Getty, Esq.
District VI - Hudson County		
Stephanie L. Lomurro, Esq.	Rachael Ann Mongiello, Esq.	Daniel P. D’Alessandro, Esq.
District VII - Mercer County		
Joseph C. Bevis, III, Esq.	Graig P. Corveleyn, Esq.	John J. Zefutie, Esq.
District VIII - Middlesex County		
Leslie A. Koch, Esq.	Rahool Patel, Esq.	Barry J. Muller, Esq.
District IX - Monmouth County		
Joseph A. Petrillo, Esq.	John R. Tatulli, Esq.	Mark B. Watson, Esq.
District XA – East Morris and Sussex Counties		
Catherine Romania, Esq.	Risa D. Rich, Esq.	Caroline Record, Esq.
District XB – West Morris and Sussex Counties		
William D. Sanders, Esq.	Steven R. Rowland, Esq.	Caroline Record, Esq.
District XI - Passaic County		
Karen Brown, Esq.	Jane Personette, Esq.	Michael Pasquale, Esq.
District XII - Union County		
Jonathan Holtz, Esq.	Charles F. Kellett, Esq.	Michael F. Brandman, Esq.
District XIII - Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren Counties		
Rita Ann M. Aquilio, Esq.	Sarah Mahony Eaton, Esq.	Donna P. Legband, Esq.

Table 2

District Fee Arbitration Committee Officers as of September 1, 2024		
CHAIR	VICE CHAIR	SECRETARY
District I – Atlantic Cape May, Cumberland and Salem Counties		
James F. Crawford, Esq.	Rebecca J. Bertram, Esq.	Michael A. Pirollo, Esq.
District IIA – North Bergen County		
Tamer M. Abdou, Esq.	Gloria K. Oh, Esq.	Terrence J. Corrison, Esq.
District IIB – South Bergen County		
Ashley Tate Cooper, Esq.	Kali A. Trahanas, Esq.	Michael J. Sprague, Esq.
District IIIA – Ocean County		
William J. Rumpel, Esq.	Jennifer D. Armstrong, Esq.	Lisa E. Halpern, Esq.
District IIIB – Burlington County		
Domenic Bruno Sanginiti, Jr., Esq.	John S. Rigden, III, Esq.	Albert M. Afonso, Esq.
District IV – Camden and Gloucester Counties		
Salvatore J. Siciliano, Esq.	Jennie Anne Owens, Esq.	Marian I. Kelly, Esq.
District VA – Essex County – Newark		
David J. Reilly, Esq.	John R. Stoelker, Esq.	Michael J. Dee, Esq.
District VB – Essex County – Suburban Essex		
Alan N. Walter, Esq.	Patrick J. Dwyer, Esq.	Harvey S. Grossman, Esq.
District VC Essex County – West Essex		
Rufino Fernandez, Jr., Esq.	Amy E. Robinson, Esq.	Cheryl H. Burstein, Esq.
District VI – Hudson County		
John V. Salierno, Esq.	Mollie Hartman Lustig, Esq.	Marvin R. Walden, Jr., Esq.
District VII – Mercer County		
Dominique Carroll, Esq.	Rachel S. Cotrino, Esq.	Rebecca Colon, Esq.
District VIII – Middlesex County		
Waimatha Lois Kahagi, Esq.	Anthony M. Campisano, Esq.	Steven Nudelman, Esq.
District IX – Monmouth County		
Roger J. Foss, Esq.	James D. Carton, IV, Esq.	Robert J. Saxton, Esq.
District X – Morris and Sussex Counties		
Linda A. Mainenti Walsh, Esq.	Alyssa M. Clemente, Esq.	Patricia J. Cistaro, Esq.
District XI – Passaic County		
Candice Drisgula, Esq.	Jason Tuchman, Esq.	Jane E. Salomon, Esq.
District XII – Union County		
Leonard V. Jones, Esq.	Mitchell H. Portnoi, Esq.	Carol A. Jeney, Esq.
District XIII – Hunterdon, Somerset and Warren Counties		
John D. Macce, Esq.	Michael J. Wilkos, Esq.	Olivier J. Kirmser, Esq.

Table 3

Disciplinary Oversight Committee
as of September 1, 2024

Chair

Matthew P. O'Malley, Esq.

Vice-Chair

R. James Kravitz, Esq.

Members

Ms. Judith E. Burgis

Clifford Dawkins, Esq.

Mr. Barry Davidson

Jeralyn Lawrence, Esq.¹³

Mr. Luis J. Martinez

Ms. Nora Poliakoff

Hon. Nesle A. Rodriguez, P.J.F.P.

Mr. Thomas J. Reck

Ronald J. Uzdavinis, Esq.

¹³ Appointed as the New Jersey State Bar Association liaison to the DOC for a one-year term effective January 1, 2023 through February 29, 2024.

Table 4

YEAR ADMITTED	
Year	Number
1960	9,000
1970	11,000
1980	21,748
1990	43,775
2000	72,738
2010	87,639
2018	98,657
2019	98,331
2020	97,971
2021	98,957
2022	99,173
2023	100,210
2024	100,759

Table 5

ATTORNEY AGE		
Age	Number	Percent
< 25	100	0.10%
25-29	2,844	2.80%
30-34	6,165	6.10%
35-39	11,757	11.70%
40-44	11,938	11.90%
45-49	10,386	10.30%
50-54	10,364	10.30%
55-59	11,455	11.40%
60-64	10,417	10.40%
65-69	8,670	8.60%
70-74	6,684	6.60%
75-80	5,104	5.10%
> 80	4,668	4.60%

Table 6

ADMISSIONS IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS					
Jurisdiction	Admissions	Percent	Jurisdiction	Admissions	Percent
New York	47,450	46.59%	Indiana	131	0.12%
Pennsylvania	26,965	26.47%	Louisiana	129	0.12%
District of Col.	6,881	6.75%	Vermont	127	0.12%
Florida	3,523	3.45%	Nevada	112	0.10%
California	2,126	2.08%	Oregon	108	0.10%
Connecticut	1,896	1.86%	Rhode Island	103	0.10%
Massachusetts	1,650	1.62%	Kentucky	93	0.09%
Maryland	1,288	1.25%	New Mexico	88	0.08%
Texas	910	0.89%	Alabama	81	0.07%
Delaware	868	0.85%	Virgin Islands	79	0.07%
Virginia	867	0.85%	Hawaii	77	0.07%
Illinois	845	0.82%	Kansas	61	0.05%
Georgia	627	0.61%	Utah	57	0.05%
Colorado	568	0.55%	Iowa	51	0.05%
Ohio	518	0.50%	Oklahoma	48	0.04%
North Carolina	452	0.44%	Nebraska	47	0.04%
Arizona	345	0.33%	Puerto Rico	42	0.04%
Michigan	304	0.29%	Arkansas	39	0.03%
Washington	270	0.26%	Alaska	36	0.03%
Missouri	243	0.23%	Montana	35	0.03%
Minnesota	241	0.23%	Mississippi	27	0.02%
Tennessee	226	0.22%	Idaho	21	0.02%
Wisconsin	171	0.16%	North Dakota	11	0.01%
New Hampshire	143	0.14%	South Dakota	9	0.00%
Maine	142	0.13%	Guam	3	0.00%
West Virginia	142	0.13%	Wyoming	0	0.00%
South Carolina	138	0.13%	Invalid Responses	418	0.41%
			Total Admissions	101,832	100.00%

Table 7

NEW JERSEY ADMITTED ATTORNEY LAW OFFICES BY STATE (2024)		
State	Number	Percent
New Jersey	26,302	72.9%
New York	4,465	12.4%
Pennsylvania	4,416	12.2%
Delaware	132	0.4%
Other	756	2.1%
No State Listed	10	0.0%
Total	36,071	100%

Table 8

NEW JERSEY PRACTITIONER LAW OFFICES BY COUNTY (2024)					
County	Number	Percent	County	Number	Percent
Atlantic	538	2.0%	Middlesex	1,619	6.2%
Bergen	3,467	13.2%	Monmouth	1,964	7.5%
Burlington	1,630	6.2%	Morris	3,190	12.1%
Camden	2,090	7.9%	Ocean	699	2.7%
Cape May	157	0.6%	Passaic	784	3.0%
Cumberland	122	0.5%	Salem	40	0.2%
Essex	4,314	16.4%	Somerset	894	3.4%
Gloucester	335	1.3%	Sussex	191	0.7%
Hudson	880	3.3%	Union	1,404	5.3%
Hunterdon	256	1.0%	Warren	110	0.4%
Mercer	1,549	5.9%	No County Listed	2	0.0%
Total				26,300	100.00%

OAE Yearly Discipline Report
(01/01/2024 - 12/31/2024)

Table 9

Disbarment (9)					
Attorney	Admitted	Location	Decided	Effective	
ALLEN, JOHN CHARLES	1995	MIDDLESEX	06/26/2024	06/26/2024	
ALLEN, JOHN CHARLES	1995	MIDDLESEX	06/26/2024	06/26/2024	
CUBBY, DAVID RICHARD JR.	2011	BERGEN	05/01/2024	05/01/2024	
KASSEM, NABIL NADIM	1994	PASSAIC	11/26/2024	11/26/2024	
LEVINE, SETH P.	1993	BERGEN	07/02/2024	07/02/2024	
OURY, DENNIS J.	1975	FLORIDA	04/03/2024	04/03/2024	
ROHRMAN, DIANE L.	2001	PENNSYLVANIA	11/26/2024	11/26/2024	
SEVERUD, STEPHEN N.§ ¹⁴	1990	WARREN	10/07/2024	10/07/2024	
STACK, ROBERT JAMES	1996	MORRIS	05/01/2024	05/01/2024	
Disbarment by Consent (6)					
Attorney	Admitted	Location	Decided	Effective	
CEHELSKY, KATHLEEN MARIE	1989	MIDDLESEX	04/04/2024	04/04/2024	
DEIGHAN, PADRAIC BRIAN	1986	CAMDEN	09/16/2024	09/16/2024	
FISHMAN, MARTIN S.	1976	BERGEN	10/07/2024	10/07/2024	
GEORGE, RONALDO C.	2004	MIDDLESEX	07/08/2024	07/08/2024	
SICA, PAUL J. ® ¹⁵	1983	MIDDLESEX	11/26/2024	11/26/2024	
STOUPAKIS, STELIOS	2004	BERGEN	07/29/2024	07/29/2024	
Suspension - Term (30)					
Attorney	Term	Admitted	Location	Decided	Effective
BRANIGAN, SEAN LAWRENCE	3 mos.	2005	ESSEX	02/07/2024	03/08/2024
CAMPBELL, JOSEPH V. JR.	12 mos.	2014	ESSEX	04/09/2024	05/31/2024
COLLINS, JOHN J.	6 mos.	2005	BERGEN	09/24/2024	10/24/2024
DESHMUKH, AMIT	3 mos.	2014	MORRIS	01/29/2024	02/28/2024
DIEHL, GLEN M. \$	3 mos.	1986	SOMERSET	05/31/2024	06/30/2024
EAGAN, MARTIN DAVID	24 mos.	1998	MORRIS	01/24/2024	01/24/2024
ESPINOSA, TOMAS ®	36 mos.	1985	HUDSON	07/22/2024	08/21/2024

¹⁴ § The “§” symbol indicates that this discipline resulted from an investigation which was docketed in response to a Trust Account Overdraft Notification.

¹⁵ ® The “®” symbol indicates that this discipline resulted from an investigation which was docketed following a referral from the Random Audit Program.

® The “®” symbol indicates that this discipline resulted from an investigation which was docketed following a referral from the Random Audit Program.

§ The “§” symbol indicates that this discipline resulted from an investigation which was docketed in response to a Trust Account Overdraft Notification.

V Order vacated.

**OAE Yearly Discipline Report
(01/01/2024 - 12/31/2024)**

FALCONE, NINO F.	12 mos.	1984	HUDSON	02/07/2024	03/08/2024
GERICKE, WILLIAM E.	12 mos.	1994	PENNSYLVANIA	07/23/2024	08/21/2024
GILMORE, GEORGE R.	24 mos.	1975	OCEAN	05/15/2024	06/13/2024
GONZALEZ, NELSON	3 mos.	1997	MORRIS	03/22/2024	04/21/2024
GOODMAN, TODD ANDREW	36 mos.	1989	PENNSYLVANIA	12/10/2024	01/19/2024
KASSEM, NABIL NADIM	3 mos.	1994	PASSAIC	07/24/2024	08/23/2024
LENTI, MARY ELIZABETH	3 mos.	2012	BURLINGTON	06/03/2024	07/03/2024
LIPARI, CHRISTOPHER SANTO	3 mos.	1997	ATLANTIC	02/07/2024	03/08/2024
McMAHON, JOSHUA F.	12 mos.	2005	FLORIDA	02/02/2024	03/04/2024
MOURTOS, NICKOLAS C.	12 mos.	2009	GLOUCESTER	03/14/2024	04/15/2024
ORLANDO, ANTHONY M.	24 mos.	2003	HUDSON	03/22/2024	04/21/2024
ORLOVSKY, DALE S.	3 mos.	1973	OCEAN	06/06/2024	07/06/2024
OSTERBYE, RAYMOND CHARLES	6 mos.	2013	MONMOUTH	07/22/2024	08/21/2024
PINNOCK, JOAN OTHELIA	36 mos.	1997	ESSEX	06/20/2024	06/20/2024
RAKOFKY, JOSEPH	12 mos.	2010	ESSEX	05/03/2024	06/02/2024
ROSENTHAL, DAVID L.	3 mos.	2010	MONMOUTH	10/18/2024	11/17/2024
RYS, LAURA M.	24 mos.	1993	SOMERSET	04/08/2024	05/08/2024
SPIELBERG, MARC A.	3 mos.	1976	OCEAN	10/31/2024	10/31/2024
STACK, ROBERT JAMES	12 mos.	1996	MORRIS	02/07/2024	03/08/2024
THOMAS, JOSHUA LOUIS	24 mos.	2012	PENNSYLVANIA	01/29/2024	02/28/2024
TOLEDO, BERNICE	12 mos.	2004	PASSAIC	03/22/2024	04/21/2024
WARREN, BRUCE K. JR.	6 mos.	2002	GLOUCESTER	02/07/2024	03/08/2024
WYNN, JOHN T. \$	3 mos.	1981	ESSEX	03/08/2024	04/08/2024
Indeterminate Suspension (2)					
Attorney	Admitted	Location	Decided	Effective	
GREENBLUM, JUSTIN A.	2004	NEW YORK	10/23/2024	10/23/2024	
RAVE, MICHAEL T.	1995	SALEM	09/30/2024	09/30/2024	
Censure (23)					
Attorney	Admitted	Location	Decided	Effective	
ABDELLAH, HASSEN I.	1983	UNION	09/06/2024	09/06/2024	
ALSOBROOK, ATHENA DULICE	1987	ESSEX	09/06/2024	09/06/2024	
ANTON, DOUGLAS CLAY	1995	BERGEN	09/05/2024	09/05/2024	
ARABI-KATBI, SAVANNA	2017	MIDDLESEX	10/09/2024	10/09/2024	
BITAR, ANDREW G. \$	2016	BERGEN	06/13/2024	06/13/2024	
CAPECE, LEAH E.	2008	ARIZONA	04/15/2024	04/15/2024	
COFFEY, GREGORY JOSEPH	1987	MORRIS	09/04/2024	09/04/2024	
EPSTEIN, ELLYN MICHELE	1984	CAMDEN	02/06/2024	02/06/2024	
HIGGINS, CHRISTOPHER ROY	2012	CALIFORNIA	12/10/2024	12/10/2024	

® The “®” symbol indicates that this discipline resulted from an investigation which was docketed following a referral from the Random Audit Program.

\$ The “\$” symbol indicates that this discipline resulted from an investigation which was docketed in response to a Trust Account Overdraft Notification.

V Order vacated.

**OAE Yearly Discipline Report
(01/01/2024 - 12/31/2024)**

KOHLHEPP, WILLIAM J.	1974	SOMERSET	02/07/2024	02/07/2024
LA VAN, JULIE ANNA	2006	BURLINGTON	04/08/2024	04/08/2024
LEHR, STEVEN R.	1988	ESSEX	09/05/2024	09/05/2024
MacNAUGHTON, WILLIAM J.	1985	SUSSEX	05/10/2024	05/10/2024
ORLANDO, ANTHONY M.	2003	HUDSON	03/18/2024	03/18/2024
RAJAN, PAUL R. ®	1981	MIDDLESEX	06/13/2024	06/13/2024
RICIGLIANO, JOSEPH JR. ®	1991	MIDDLESEX	08/22/2024	08/22/2024
ROBBINS, SPENCER B. ®	1981	MIDDLESEX	12/10/2024	12/10/2024
ROBINSON, RICHARD DONNELL	2004	BURLINGTON	10/07/2024	10/07/2024
SMITH, BRIAN J.	1994	PENNSYLVANIA	07/02/2024	07/02/2024
ST. JOHN, FRANCIS X.	1972	MERCER	06/13/2024	06/13/2024
TIDER, DAVID E.	1990	BERGEN	01/09/2024	01/09/2024
WEINBERG, MARC A.	1990	PENNSYLVANIA	09/24/2024	09/24/2024
WURMS, MARCEL R.	1982	BERGEN	05/10/2024	05/10/2024
Reprimand (33)				
Attorney	Admitted	Location	Decided	Effective
ARTUSA, SANTO V. JR.	2009	HUDSON	02/06/2024	02/06/2024
ASHTON, JOSEPH J. III	2010	PENNSYLVANIA	05/10/2024	05/10/2024
BARRETT, DENNIS J. \$	1977	MONMOUTH	10/30/2024	10/30/2024
CHIN, DAVID K.	2004	HUDSON	06/13/2024	06/13/2024
CLARKE, KECIA M.	1999	ESSEX	03/25/2024	03/25/2024
DAGGETT, GEORGE T.	1966	SUSSEX	09/24/2024	09/24/2024
DE PIERRO, GIOVANNI	2001	ESSEX	03/08/2024	03/08/2024
DIEHL, GLEN M. \$	1986	SOMERSET	05/31/2024	05/31/2024
DRATCH, BRIAN	2000	ESSEX	12/11/2024	12/11/2024
FALONI, DAVID A. JR.	1995	ESSEX	05/10/2024	05/10/2024
GOROKHOVICH, MICHAEL A. \$	2004	CAMDEN	09/06/2024	09/06/2024
HICKERSON-BREEDON, DENNIS TODD	2018	PASSAIC	10/21/2024	10/21/2024
HOPKINS, JOHN J. III ®	1991	MONMOUTH	10/21/2024	10/21/2024
KENNEY, DEVIN KENNEDY	2002	SUSSEX	12/10/2024	12/10/2024
LENNEY, THOMAS MICHAEL	1996	MORRIS	01/02/2024	01/02/2024
Mc ILWAIN, TIMOTHY JOSEPH ®	1996	ATLANTIC	07/02/2024	07/02/2024
MENSCHING, JOHN J. ®	1984	OCEAN	06/06/2024	06/06/2024
MONTELEONE, ANDREW L.	1980	HUDSON	07/22/2024	07/22/2024
OSHMAN, THEODORE \$	1982	HUDSON	12/11/2024	12/11/2024
PARMELEE, MICHAEL KEITH	1996	MONMOUTH	01/02/2024	01/02/2024
POLICASTRO, MICHAEL ANTHONY	2007	MIDDLESEX	10/07/2024	10/07/2024
ROBINSON, RICHARD DONNELL	2004	BURLINGTON	01/29/2024	01/29/2024
RUTIGLIANO, JOSEPH A. \$	2001	BERGEN	07/02/2024	07/02/2024

® The “®” symbol indicates that this discipline resulted from an investigation which was docketed following a referral from the Random Audit Program.

\$ The “\$” symbol indicates that this discipline resulted from an investigation which was docketed in response to a Trust Account Overdraft Notification.

V Order vacated.

**OAE Yearly Discipline Report
(01/01/2024 - 12/31/2024)**

SANCHEZ, RODRIGO \$	2001	UNION	05/17/2024	05/17/2024
SHELLER, LAURENCE R.	1993	MERCER	06/06/2024	06/06/2024
SMITH, ROYCE W.	2004	PENNSYLVANIA	05/10/2024	05/10/2024
SMITS, ANNMARIE P. ®	1994	PASSAIC	08/13/2024	08/13/2024
WACHTEL, ROBERT \$	1982	ESSEX	05/17/2024	05/17/2024
WALRATH, CHRISTOPH M.	1984	PENNSYLVANIA	05/01/2024	05/01/2024
WARNER, MARY E.	1990	HUNTERDON	03/08/2024	03/08/2024
WAIT, MATTHEW T. ®	2003	BURLINGTON	08/13/2024	08/13/2024
WEINBERG, ROBERT P. ®	1967	HUDSON	02/07/2024	02/07/2024
WOLFF, HENRY F. III ®	1973	MONMOUTH	12/27/2024	12/27/2024
Admonition (18)				
Attorney	Admitted	Location	Decided	Effective
AMBROSIO, JOHN T.	1987	ESSEX	05/29/2024	05/29/2024
CAMBRIA, ANTHONY R. ®	1993	MONMOUTH	01/23/2024	01/23/2024
CIRELLI, ERIN A. ®	1996	MORRIS	11/26/2024	11/26/2024
COLELLA, JOSEPH M.	1972	BERGEN	04/23/2024	04/23/2024
CONROY, JOHN L. JR.	1975	CAMDEN	01/08/2024	01/08/2024
FOLTZ, DAVID BAYARD	1986	UNION	06/24/2024	06/24/2024
FORTUNATO, JOSEPH	1981	ESSEX	11/22/2024	11/22/2024
FURMAN, HARRY	1985	CUMBERLAND	05/10/2024	05/10/2024
GELMAN, JAMES E.	1979	BERGEN	02/20/2024	02/20/2024
GESCHWER, MARK S. ®	1974	BERGEN	08/13/2024	08/13/2024
GLUCK, MICHAEL HOWARD	1985	MONMOUTH	05/01/2024	05/01/2024
ISOLA, DAVID R.	2013	CALIFORNIA	03/08/2024	03/08/2024
KHAWAJA, NOSHEEN ®	1995	BERGEN	09/24/2024	09/24/2024
McKENNA, EDWARD J. JR.	1975	MONMOUTH	09/24/2024	09/24/2024
PRIVETERA, LORA M.	1992	OCEAN	04/30/2024	04/30/2024
ROCHMAN, DAVID S.	1990	CAMDEN	03/22/2024	03/22/2024
WILLIAMS, MARK \$	1972	MONMOUTH	05/28/2024	05/28/2024
WIN, FREDERICK AYOOB	2007	PASSAIC	06/24/2024	06/24/2024
License Restriction (1)				
Attorney	Admitted	Location	Decided	Effective
TOCZYDLOWSKI, JOHN EDWARD	V	PENNSYLVANIA	03/22/2024	03/22/2024

® The “®” symbol indicates that this discipline resulted from an investigation which was docketed following a referral from the Random Audit Program.

\$ The “\$” symbol indicates that this discipline resulted from an investigation which was docketed in response to a Trust Account Overdraft Notification.

V Order vacated.

**OAE Yearly Discipline Report
(01/01/2024 - 12/31/2024)**

Temporary Suspension (19)						
Attorney	Admit.	Location	Basis	Docket	Decided	Effective
ANDERSON, RUSSELL F. JR.	2006	BERGEN	NC	IIA-2020-0025E	10/16/2024	10/16/2024
ARTUSA, SANTO V. JR.	2009	HUDSON	FEE	XIV-2023-0317E, 0318E, 0417E and 0419E	01/02/2024	01/02/2024
BITAR, ANDREW G.	2016	BERGEN	NC	XIV-2024-0022E	07/02/2024	07/02/2024
CHESEBRO, KENNETH	2006	PUERTO RICO	ATS	XIV-2023-0354E	09/09/2024	09/09/2024
CRAWFORD, KAREEM J.	2000	BURLINGTON	FEE	XIV-2024-0356E	11/18/2024	12/18/2024 ^v
D'ALESSANDRO, EDWARD G. JR.	1990	MORRIS	NC	XIV-2023-0390E	05/30/2024	05/30/2024
DEIGHAN, PADRAIC BRIAN	1986	CAMDEN	NC	XIV-2022-0187E	07/02/2024	07/02/2024
FOREMAN, PAUL S.	2006	ESSEX	Other	XIV-2023-0453E	05/10/2024	05/10/2024
GOODMAN, TODD ANDREW	1989	PENNSYLVANIA	NC	XIV-2023-0376E	01/19/2024	01/19/2024
GRANT, GARY DAVID	1985	MORRIS	NC	XIV-2023-0227E	08/13/2024	08/13/2024
HARTMAN, FRANCES ANN	1984	BURLINGTON	NC	XIV-2023-0474E	07/02/2024	07/02/2024
HOOKE, CHADWICK L.	2015	BURLINGTON	NC	XIV-2023-0264E	03/21/2024	03/21/2024
JUCKETT, JAY LOWELL	1987	MONMOUTH	NC	XIV-2023-0231E	01/29/2024	01/29/2024
LENTI, MARY ELIZABETH	2012	BURLINGTON	Other	IIIA-2018-0015E	05/17/2024	06/15/2024 ^v
LENTI, MARY ELIZABETH	2012	BURLINGTON	FEE	XIV-2024-0355E	11/18/2024	11/18/2024
PARISI, BRITTANY L.	2020	MONMOUTH	FEE	XIV-2024-0178E and 0180E	08/13/2024	09/12/2024
PRESTON, RICHARD HARRIS	2006	MIDDLESEX	NC	XIV-2023-0123E	05/30/2024	05/30/2024
ROMANOWSKI, CURTIS J.	1991	TEXAS	Other	XIV-2024-0134E And 0176E	10/08/2024	10/08/2024
RUBIN, PAUL C.	1982	MERCER	NC	XIV-2023-0502E	09/24/2024	09/24/2024

® The “®” symbol indicates that this discipline resulted from an investigation which was docketed following a referral from the Random Audit Program.

§ The “§” symbol indicates that this discipline resulted from an investigation which was docketed in response to a Trust Account Overdraft Notification.

V Order vacated.

OAE Yearly Discipline Report
(01/01/2024 - 12/31/2024)

Reinstatements (13)				
Attorney	Admitted	Location	Decided	Effective
ABRAHAM, MARKIS MIGUEL	2008	HUDSON	09/24/2024	09/24/2024
BRANIGAN, SEAN LAWRENCE	2005	ESSEX	07/10/2024	07/10/2024
DESHMUKH, AMIT	2014	MORRIS	06/19/2024	06/19/2024
GONZALEZ, NELSON	1997	MORRIS	07/24/2024	07/24/2024
GONZALEZ, RALPH ALEXANDER	1987	CAMDEN	01/03/2024	01/03/2024
GORDON, RICHARD C.	2000	CONNECTICUT	09/16/2024	09/16/2024
JORDAN, EDGAR EUGENE III	1990	NEW YORK	07/22/2024	07/22/2024
LIPARI, CHRISTOPHER SANTO	1997	ATLANTIC	06/19/2024	06/19/2024
MAYNOR, ZANIAH D.	2020	MIDDLESEX	05/21/2024	05/21/2024
OLEWUENYI, CHRIS C.	1998	UNION	02/28/2024	02/28/2024
PLAGMANN, ROBERT ARTHUR	2006	VIRGINIA	11/27/2024	11/27/2024
REYES, ARCADIO J.	1991	MARYLAND	12/27/2024	12/27/2024
SCHULTZ, WAYNE A.	1975	WARREN	03/21/2024	03/21/2024

® The “®” symbol indicates that this discipline resulted from an investigation which was docketed following a referral from the Random Audit Program.

§ The “§” symbol indicates that this discipline resulted from an investigation which was docketed in response to a Trust Account Overdraft Notification.

V Order vacated.

2024
Disciplinary Case Summaries

Table 10

Hassen I. Abdellah - Censured on September 6, 2024 (258 N.J. 405) for violating RPC 1.5(b) (failing to set forth, in writing, the basis or rate of the legal fee), RPC 1.7(a) (engaging in a concurrent conflict of interest), RPC 8.1(a) (making a false statement of material fact in a disciplinary matter), and RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation). Amanda Figland represented the OAE and Respondent was represented by Alan Bowman on a disciplinary stipulation filed with the DRB. Respondent was previously disciplined: Reprimanded in 2020.

John Charles Allen - Disbarred on June 26, 2024 (257 N.J. 613) (DRB 23-069) for violating RPC 1.1(a) (committing gross neglect), RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and to comply with reasonable requests for information), RPC 1.16(d) (upon termination of the representation, failing to refund any advance payment of a fee that has not been earned or incurred and failing to surrender papers and property to which the client is entitled), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (two instances). Ruth A. Rauls represented District VIII on a Certification of the Record and respondent was pro se. Ryan J. Moriarty appeared before the Supreme Court on an Order to Show Cause and respondent was pro se. Respondent was previously disciplined. Admonition in 2005, censure in 2015, temporary suspension in 2018; temporary suspension in 2019, temporary suspension in 2021, temporary suspensions in 2022 and temporary suspension in 2023.

John Charles Allen - Disbarred on June 26, 2024 (257 N.J. 608) (DRB 22-190) for violating RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and to comply with reasonable requests for information), RPC 1.5(a) (committing fee overreaching), RPC 1.5(c) (failing to provide in writing whether expenses would be deducted before or after the contingent fee is calculated), RPC 1.16(d) (upon termination of the representation, failing to refund any advance payment of a fee that has not been earned or incurred and failing to

surrender papers and property to which the client is entitled), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (two instances). Rahool Patel represented the District VIII Ethics Committee on a Certification of the Record and respondent was pro se. Ryan J. Moriarty appeared before the Supreme Court on an Order to Show Cause and respondent was pro se. Respondent was previously disciplined. Admonition in 2005, censure in 2015, temporary suspension in 2018; temporary suspension in 2019, temporary suspension in 2021, temporary suspensions in 2022 and temporary suspension in 2023.

John Charles Allen - Disbarred on June 26, 2024 (257 N.J. 610) (DRB 22-067) for violating RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (two instances) and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice). Hillary Horton represented the Office of Attorney Ethics on a Certification of the Record and respondent was pro se. Ryan J. Moriarty appeared before the Supreme Court on an Order to Show Cause and Respondent was pro se. Respondent was previously disciplined. Admonition in 2005, censure in 2015, temporary suspension in 2018; temporary suspension in 2019, temporary suspension in 2021, temporary suspensions in 2022 and temporary suspension in 2023.

John Charles Allen- Disbarred on June 26, 2024 (257 N.J. 606) (DRB 22-104, 22-121, 22-124, and 22-125) for violating RPC 1.1(a) (committing gross neglect), RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence) (four instances), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and to comply with reasonable requests for information) (four instances), RPC 1.5(a) (charging an unreasonable fee--performing no work on a matter), RPC 1.16(a)(2) (failing to withdraw from representation if the lawyer's physical or mental condition materially impairs the lawyer's ability to represent the client), RPC 1.16(a)(3) (failing to withdraw from representation despite being discharged by the client), RPC 1.16(d) (upon termination of the representation, failing to refund any advance payment of a fee that has not been earned or incurred) (four instances), RPC 3.2 (failing to expedite litigation), RPC 8.1(b) (failing to

2024 Disciplinary Case Summaries

cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (eight instances), RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation), and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice) (two instances). Rahool Patel, Ruth A. Rauls, Leslie A Koch represented the District VIII Ethics Committee on Certifications of the Record and respondent was pro se. Ryan J. Moriarty appeared before the Supreme Court on an Order to Show Cause and respondent was pro se. Respondent was previously disciplined. Admonition in 2005, censure in 2015, temporary suspension in 2018; temporary suspension in 2019, temporary suspension in 2021, temporary suspensions in 2022 and temporary suspension in 2023.

John Charles Allen - Disbarred on June 26, 2024 (257 N.J. 611) (DRB 21-260 and 21-264) for violating RPC 1.1(a) (committing gross neglect), RPC 1.2(a) (failing to abide by the client's decisions), RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence) (two instances), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and to comply with reasonable requests for information), RPC 1.5(a) (charging an unreasonable fee - not performing work), RPC 1.7(a)(2) (engaging in a conflict of interest), RPC 1.16(a)(2) (failing to withdraw from representation if the lawyer's physical or mental condition materially impairs the lawyer's ability to represent the client), RPC 1.16(a)(3) (failing to withdraw from representation despite being discharged by the client) (two instances), RPC 1.16(d) (failing to protect the client's interests upon termination of representation) (two instances), RPC 3.2 (failing to expedite litigation), RPC 3.4(c) (knowingly disobeying an obligation under the rules of a tribunal), RPC 5.5(a)(1) (practicing law while suspended), RPC 8.1(a) (knowingly making a false statement of material fact in a disciplinary matter), RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (four instances), RPC 8.4(6) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer -- practicing law while suspended in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:21-22(6)(1), RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation) (four instances), and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice); Ryan J. Moriarty represented the OAE and Patricia M. Love represented the District VIII Ethics Committee on Certifications of the Record and Respondent was pro se. Ryan J. Moriarty appeared before the

Supreme Court on an Order to Show Cause and respondent was pro se. Respondent was previously disciplined. Admonition in 2005, censure in 2015, temporary suspension in 2018; temporary suspension in 2019, temporary suspension in 2021, temporary suspensions in 2022 and Temporary Suspension in 2023.

Athena Dulice Alsobrook – Censured on September 6, 2024 (258 N.J. 404) for violating RPC 1.15(a) (engaging in commingling and negligent misappropriation of client funds) (two instances), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6) and RPC 5.5(a)(1) (engaging in the unauthorized practice of law by failing to maintain liability insurance while practicing as a limited liability company, as Rule 1:21-B(a)(4) requires. Colleen L. Burden represented the OAE and John McGill, III, represented the respondent.

John T. Ambrosio - Admonished on May 29, 2024 (Unreported) for violating RPC 1.4(b) (failure to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and to comply with reasonable requests for information); RPC 1.15(d) (failure to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6); and RPC 8.1(b) (failure to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Diane M. Yandach represented the OAE and Anthony Ambrosio represented the respondent.

Douglas Clay Anton - Censured on September 5, 2024 (258 N.J. 399) for violating RPC 1.8(a) (engaging in an improper business transaction with a client), RPC 1.8(e) (providing financial assistance to a client in connection with pending or contemplated litigation), RPC 1.15(a) (commingling of funds), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6), RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities), and RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation). Ryan J. Moriarty represented the OAE and respondent was represented by Joseph R. Rem, Jr. and Craig R. Weis, on a Stipulation of Discipline by Consent accepted by the DRB.

Savanna Arabi-Kathi – Censured on a certified record on October 7, 2024 (258 N.J. 486) for violating RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to communicate with a client), RPC 1.4(c) (failing to explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions about the representation), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (two instances). Thomas W. Barlow

2024 Disciplinary Case Summaries

handled the matter for the District VIII Ethics Committee and respondent failed to appear.

Santo V. Artusa, Jr. - Reprimanded effective February 6, 2024 (256 N.J. 359) for violating RPC 1.1(a) (engaging in gross neglect); and RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence). The Court also ordered that respondent must provide to the OAE proof of his fitness to practice law, as attested to by a medical doctor approved by the OAE, and proof of his continued treatment for alcohol addiction. Richard W. Fogarty represented District VI before the DRB and Raymond S. Londa represented respondent. Respondent was previously disciplined: Censured in 2021; and temporarily suspended twice in 2023.

Joseph J. Ashton, III – Reprimanded on a certified record on May 10, 2024 (257 N.J. 225) for violating RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (two instances); and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice). Hillary K. Horton represented the OAE and respondent was pro se. The respondent was previously disciplined: Suspended for two years in 2022.

Dennis J. Barrett – Reprimanded on October 30, 2024 (258 N.J.550) for violating RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping provisions of Rule 1:21-6) and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Leighann Reilly represented the OAE and respondent was pro se on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB. Respondent was previously disciplined: Reprimanded in 2011. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Trust Overdraft Notification Program.

Andrew G. Bitar – Censured on a certified record on June 13, 2024 (257 N.J. 574) for violating RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6), RPC 5.5(a)(1) (engaging in the unauthorized practice of law), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (two instances). Diane M. Yandach represented the OAE and respondent failed to appear. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Trust Overdraft Notification Program.

Sean Lawrence Branigan - Suspended for three months on February 7, 2024, effective March 8, 2024, (256 N.J. 354) for violating RPC 5.3(a) (failing to supervise nonlawyer staff) (three instances), RPC 7.1(a) (engaging in false or misleading communications about the lawyer, the lawyer's services, or any matter in which the lawyer has or seeks a professional relationship) (seven instances),

RPC 7.1(b) (using an advertisement or other related communication known to have been disapproved by the Committee on Attorney Advertising) (three instances), RPC 7.3(b) (engaging in improper, unsolicited, direct contact with a prospective client) (eight instances), RPC 7.4(a) (misrepresenting that the lawyer has been recognized or certified as a specialist in a particular field of law), and RPC 7.5(e) (using an impermissible firm name or letterhead) (two instances) Jennifer Iseman represented the OAE and Omar K. Qadeer represented respondent. The respondent was previously disciplined: Admonished in 2014.

Anthony R. Cambria – Admonished on January 23, 2024 (Unreported) for multiple recordkeeping deficiencies in violation of RPC 1.15(d). Tara L. Hanna appeared before the DRB for the OAE and respondent appeared pro se. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

Joseph V. Campbell, Jr. – Suspended for one year on April 9, 2024 (retroactive to May 31, 2023), (257 N.J. 27) for violating RPC 8.4(b) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on a lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects). Hillary K. Horton represented the OAE and respondent was pro se on a motion for final discipline granted by the DRB. The respondent was previously disciplined: Temporarily suspended in 2023.

Leah E. Capece - Censured on April 15, 2024 (257 N.J. 31) on a motion for discipline by consent for violating RPC 5.3(a) (failing to ensure that the conduct of a non-lawyer employed by the attorney is compatible with the attorney's professional obligations) and RPC 5.5(a)(2) (assisting another in the unauthorized practice of law). Amanda Figland represented the OAE and respondent was pro se.

Kathleen Marie Cehelsky - Disbarred by consent on April 4, 2024 (256 N.J. 614) for knowing misappropriation of estate funds and criminal conduct involving the misapplication of entrusted funds and the creation of fraudulent bank account records and submitting them to the OAE. Jason D. Saunders represented the OAE and Raymond S. Londa represented the respondent.

David K. Chin – Censured on June 13, 2024 (257 N.J. 575) for violating RPC 1.4(b) (failing to communicate with a client), RPC 1.16(c) (failing to comply with applicable law requiring notice to or permission of a tribunal when terminating a

2024 Disciplinary Case Summaries

representation), and RPC 1.16(d) (failing to protect a client's interests upon termination of the representation). Sarabraj S. Thapar appeared before the DRB for District VI and the respondent waived appearance.

Erin A. Cirelli – Admonished on November 26, 2024 (Unreported) for failing to comply with recordkeeping requirements in violation of R.1:21-6. Diane M. Yandach represented the OAE on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB and respondent was pro se. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

Kecia M. Clarke - Reprimanded on March 25, 2024, (256 N.J. 589) for violating RPC 4.2 (communicating improperly with a person represented by counsel) and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice). Corsica D. Smith represented the OAE and Marc D. Garfinkle represented respondent on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB.

Gregory Joseph Coffey- Censured on September 4, 2024 (258 N.J. 397) for violating RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and to comply with reasonable requests for information), RPC 1.7(a)(1) and (2) (engaging in a concurrent conflict of interest), and RPC 8.1(a) (knowingly making a false statement of material fact to disciplinary authorities), and RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation) (two instances). Ryan J. Moriarty represented the OAE and respondent was represented by Mark Tallmadge on a Stipulation of Discipline by Consent accepted by the DRB.

Joseph M. Colella – Admonished on April 23, 2024 (257 N.J. 173) for violating RPC 1.15(a) (commingling personal and client funds in an attorney trust account), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Rachael L. Weeks represented the OAE and respondent was pro se.

John J. Collins – Suspended for six months on September 24, 2024, effective October 24, 2024, (258 N.J.446) for violating RPC 1.15(a) (commingling), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-

6), RPC 5.5(a)(1) (practicing law while suspended), RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation), and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice). Rachael L. Weeks represented the OAE and John McGill, III, Esq. represented the respondent. Respondent was previously disciplined: Temporary suspension in 2013; three-month suspension in 2015, effective in 2016.

John L. Conroy, Jr. – Admonished on January 8, 2024 (256 N.J. 169) for violating RPC 1.5(b) (failing to set forth in writing the basis or rate of the legal fee) pertaining to a \$2,500 legal fee. Respondent was required to refund the \$2,500 fee to the client and did so prior to the entry of the order. Ronald G. Lieberman represented District IV and respondent appeared pro se on a Motion for Discipline by Consent granted by the DRB.

David R. Cubby, Jr. - Disbarred on May 3, 2024 (257 N.J. 182) for violating RPC 5.5(a)(1) (practicing law while ineligible and suspended) (two instances), RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (two instances), and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice) (two instances). Ryan J. Moriarty appeared before the Supreme Court for the OAE and respondent failed to appear. The respondent was previously disciplined: temporarily suspended in 2021, suspended for three months in 2022 and censured in 2022.

George T. Daggett – Reprimanded on September 24, 2024 (258 N.J. 452) for violating RPC 1.4(c) (failing to explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions about the representation) and RPC 1.5(b) (failing to set forth in writing the basis or rate of the legal fee). Robert L. Ritter represented District XB before the DRB and Michael D. Critchley represented the respondent. The respondent was previously disciplined: Admonished in 1997 and 1999.

Padraic B. Deighan - Disbarred by Consent on September 16, 2024 (258 N.J. 444) after acknowledging he knowingly misappropriated client funds. Tara Hanna handled the matter for the OAE and Marisa Ciarrocki represented the respondent. Respondent was previously disciplined: Censured in 2017 and temporarily suspended in 2024.

2024 Disciplinary Case Summaries

Giovanni De Piero - Reprimanded on March 8, 2024, (256 N.J. 469) for violating RPC 1.15(a) (engaging in negligent misappropriation of client funds and commingling) (two instances), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6), RPC 5.5(a) (engaging in the unauthorized practice of law by failing to maintain liability insurance while practicing as a limited liability company, as Rule 1:21-1B(a)(4) requires), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Amanda Figland represented the OAE and Respondent was pro se. Respondent was previously disciplined: Admonished in 2022.

Amit Deshmukh - Suspended for three months on January 29, 2024, effective February 28, 2024 (256 N.J. 324) for violating RPC 3.1 (engaging in frivolous litigation). Susan E. Champion represented District XI and respondent was pro se.

Glen M. Diehl - Reprimanded on a certified record on May 31, 2024 (257 N.J. 488) for violating RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Ryan J. Moriarty represented the OAE and respondent failed to appear. Respondent was previously disciplined: Temporarily suspended in 2019 and suspended for three months in 2024. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Trust Overdraft Notification Program.

Brian M. Dratch – Reprimanded on December 11, 2024 (259 N.J.360) for violating RPC 1.1(a) (engaging in gross neglect); RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence); RPC 1.4(b) (failing to communicate with a client); RPC 1.4(c) (failing to explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation); and RPC 1.16(d) (failing to protect a client’s interests upon termination of the representation). Renier P. Pierantoni represented District VC and Julian Wilsey represented respondent on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB.

Martin David Eagan – Suspended for two years on January 24, 2024 (256 N.J. 322) following his guilty plea and conviction, in the United States District Court for the District of New Jersey, for one count of conspiracy to commit bank fraud in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 1344 and 1349, and for violating RPC 1.15(a) (knowing misappropriation of escrow funds), RPC 8.4(b) (committing of a criminal act that reflects adversely on a lawyer’s honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in

other respects), RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation), and the principles of *In re Wilson*, 81 N.J. 451 (1979) and *In re Hollendonner*, 102 N.J. 21 (1985). Diane M. Yandach appeared before the DRB for the OAE and Patrick Minter appeared for respondent. Respondent was previously disciplined: Temporarily Suspended on February 24, 2022.

Ellyn Michele Epstein - Censured on February 6, 2024 (256 N.J. 358) on a disciplinary stipulation for violating RPC 1.4(c) (failing to explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation), RPC 1.5(a) (charging an unreasonable fee), RPC 1.5(c) (failing to provide a written fee agreement in a contingent fee case and to specify the method for calculating the legal fee), RPC 1.15(a) (commingling personal and client funds), RPC 1.15(c) (failing to segregate property in which both the attorney and another party have an interest until there is an accounting, also violating Rule 1:21-7(g)), and failing to hold a disputed fee separate until resolution of the dispute) (two instances), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6), RPC 3.4(c) (knowingly disobeying an obligation under the rules of a tribunal), and RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation) (two instances). Amanda Figland represented the OAE before the Disciplinary Review Board and respondent was pro se.

Tomas Espinosa - Suspended for three years on July 22, 2024, effective August 21, 2024 (258 N.J. 176) for violating RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and to comply with reasonable requests for information) (two instances), RPC 1.4(c) (failing to explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions about the representation), RPC 1.5(a) (failing to charge a reasonable fee) (two instances), RPC 1.5(c) (failing to set forth in writing whether expenses would be deducted before or after the contingent fee is calculated), RPC 1.7(a)(2) and (b) (engaging in a concurrent conflict of interest) (three instances), RPC 1.8(a) (engaging in an improper business transaction with a client), RPC 1.8(f) (accepting compensation for representing a client from a source other than the client without the client’s informed consent), RPC 1.9(a) (engaging in a conflict of interest with a former client), RPC

2024 Disciplinary Case Summaries

1.9(c)(1) (using information relating to a former representation to the disadvantage of the former client), RPC 1.15(a) (negligently misappropriating client funds), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping provisions of Rule 1:21-6), RPC 1.16(a)(1) (failing to withdraw from a representation if it will result in a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct or other law), RPC 1.16(d) (failing to refund an unearned portion of the fee upon termination of representation) (two instances), RPC 5.3(a) and (b) (failing to supervise nonlawyer staff), RPC 5.4(c) (permitting a person who recommends, employs, or pays the attorney to render legal services for another to direct or regulate the attorney's professional judgment in rendering legal services), RPC 7.2(c) (giving something of value to a person for recommending the lawyer's services), RPC 7.3(d) (compensating or giving anything of value to a person or organization for recommending or securing the lawyer's services), RPC 8.1(a) (knowingly make a false statement of material fact in a disciplinary matter), RPC 8.4(a) (violating or attempting to violate the Rules of Professional Conduct) (three instances), and RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation) (two instances). Amanda Figland appeared before the Supreme Court and Respondent was pro se. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

Nino F. Falcone - Suspended for one year on February 7, 2024 (effective March 8, 2024), (256 N.J. 361) following a motion for reciprocal discipline for violating RPC 8.4(b) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects); RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation); and RPC 8.4(g) (engaging, in a professional capacity, in conduct involving discrimination – sexual harassment). Hillary K. Horton represented the OAE and Joseph P. Castiglia represented respondent. The respondent was previously disciplined: Reprimanded in 2001 and censured in 2009.

David A. Faloni, Jr. – Reprimanded on May 10, 2024 (257 N.J. 226) for violations of RPC 1.4(c) (failing to explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions about the representation) and RPC 1.5(b) (failing to set forth in writing the basis or rate of a legal fee) where respondent produced estate documents for clients procured by a non-legal

entity. HoeChin Kim represented the OAE and Alan L. Zegas represented the respondent.

Martin S. Fishman - Disbarred by consent on October 7, 2024, (258 N.J. 484). Respondent admitted that he knowingly misappropriated funds, and that if he went to a hearing, he could not successfully defend himself against those charges. Timothy J. McNamara represented the OAE and Shawn Barnes represented the respondent.

David Bayard Foltz – Admonished on June 24, 2024 (Unreported) for knowingly violating RPC 1.5(b) (failure to set forth in writing the basis or rate of the attorney's fee); RPC 1.15(a) (negligent misappropriation); and RPC 1.15(d) (failure to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of R. 1:21-6). Hillary K. Horton represented the OAE and Howard B. Mankoff represented the respondent.

Joseph A. Fortunato – Admonished on November 22, 2024 (Unreported) for violating RPC 1.1(a) (engaging in gross neglect in connection with the Idumonyi-Scott client matter); RPC 1.3 (two instances – lacking diligence); RPC 1.4(b) (two instances – failing to communicate with a client); RPC 1.5(b) (failing to set forth, in writing, the basis or rate of the legal fee); and RPC 1.16(d) (failing to protect a client's interests upon termination of the representation). Thomas M. Wester appeared before the DRB for District VC and John McGill, III appeared for the respondent.

Harry Furman – Admonished on a certified record on May 10, 2024 (257 N.J. 229), for violating RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed and to comply with reasonable requests for information), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Robert T. Belasco, Jr. represented District I and respondent failed to appear.

James E. Gelman – Admonished on February 20, 2024 (Unreported) for violating of RPC 1.1(a) (engaging in gross neglect); RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence); RPC 1.4(b) (failing to communicate with the client); and RPC 1.16(d) (failing to protect the client's interests upon termination of the representation). Merrick D. Steinberg represented District IIA and Kalman H. Geist represented the respondent.

Ronaldo C. George - Disbarred by consent on July 8, 2024, (258 N.J. 35) Respondent admitted using clients' funds for personal living expenses without the clients'

2024 Disciplinary Case Summaries

authorization for more than five years. Respondent further acknowledged submitting to the OAE fraudulent bank records that had been altered using computer software to conceal evidence of misappropriation. Christopher W. Goodwin represented the OAE and Respondent appeared pro se.

William Gericke - Suspended for one year on July 23, 2024 (effective August 21, 2024), (258 N.J. 207) following a motion for reciprocal discipline for violating RPC 1.8(b) (engaging in a conflict of interest by using information relating to the representation of a client to the client's disadvantage without informed consent); RPC 4.1(a)(1) (knowingly making false statement of material fact or law to a third person); and RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation). Hillary K. Horton represented the OAE and Joshua J.T. Byrne represented respondent.

Mark S. Geschwer – Admonished on August 13, 2024 (258 N.J. 394) for violating RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6). Colleen L. Burden represented the OAE and Roger Plawker represented the respondent. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

George R. Gilmore - Suspended on May 15, 2024 from the practice of law for a period of two years prospectively, with a twenty-two-month credit for respondent's temporary suspension, and until further order of the Court, effective June 13, 2024 (257 N.J. 353) for violating RPC 1.15(b) (failing to promptly deliver funds to an entitled party), RPC 8.4(b) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects) (two instances), and RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation) (two instances). Amanda Figland represented the OAE and Kevin H. Marino represented respondent on a Disciplinary Stipulation. Respondent was previously disciplined: Temporarily Suspended in 2019.

Michael Howard Gluck - Admonished on May 1, 2024, (257 N.J. 175) for violating RPC 1.7(a)(2) (engaging in a conflict of interest) and 1.8(a) (engaging in a prohibited business transaction with a client). Timothy J. McNamara represented the OAE and John E. Hogan represented respondent on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB.

Nelson Gonzalez – Suspended for three months on March 22, 2024, effective April 21, 2024, (256 N.J. 509) for violating RPC 3.3(a)(5) (failing to disclose to the tribunal a material fact knowing that the omission is reasonably certain to mislead the tribunal); RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities); and RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation). Darrell M. Felsenstein represented the OAE and Robert E. Ramsey represented Respondent. The respondent was previously disciplined: Suspended for six months in 2023; Censured in 2020; suspended for three months in 2020; and suspended for 3 months in 2014.

Todd Andrew Goodman - Suspended for three years on December 10, 2024 (retroactive to January 19, 2024), (259 N.J. 331) for violating RPC 8.4(b) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer). Hillary K. Horton represented the OAE and Steven Kudatzky represented respondent on a motion for final discipline granted by the DRB.

Michael A. Gorokhovich – Reprimanded on a certified record on September 6, 2024 (257 N.J. 538) for violating RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6) and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Jason D. Saunders represented the OAE and respondent failed to appear. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Trust Overdraft Notification Program.

Justin A. Greenblum - Suspended for an indeterminate period on October 23, 2024 (258 N.J. 522) and ordered that respondent shall not petition for reinstatement to practice for a period of four years following the effective date of the indeterminate suspension; for violating RPC 1.7(a)(2) (engaging in a concurrent conflict of interest), RPC 1.8(a) (engaging in an improper business transaction with a client), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Timothy J. McNamara represented the OAE and respondent failed to appear.

Dennis Todd Hickerson-Breedon – Reprimanded on October 21, 2024 (258 N.J. 518) for violating RPC 1.1(a) (engaging in gross neglect), RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence), RPC 1.5(b) (failing to set forth in writing the basis or rate of the legal fee), RPC 3.2 (failing to expedite litigation and treat with courtesy and consideration all persons involved in the legal process) (two instances), and RPC 3.5(c) (engaging in conduct intended to disrupt a tribunal). Steven

2024 Disciplinary Case Summaries

Stadtmauer appeared before the DRB for District XI and respondent appeared pro se.

Christopher Roy Higgins – Censured on December 10, 2024 (259 N.J. 332) on a disciplinary stipulation for violating RPC 5.5(a)(1) (engaging in the unauthorized practice of law). Diane M. Yandach represented the OAE and Anthony Vignuolo represented the respondent. Respondent was previously disciplined: Temporary suspension in 2018, censured in 2021, reprimanded in 2021 and suspended for three months in 2021..

John J. Hopkins, III - Reprimanded on October 18, 2024 (258 N.J. 519) on a disciplinary stipulation for violating RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6) and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Amanda Figland represented the OAE and respondent was pro se. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

David R. Isola – Admonished on March 8, 2024 (256 N.J. 467) following a motion for reciprocal discipline for violating RPC 1.2(a) (failure to abide by the client's decisions concerning the scope and objectives of representation); RPC 1.4(b) (failure to communicate with a client); and RPC 1.4(c) (failure to explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions about the representation). Hillary Horton represented the OAE and Respondent was pro se.

Nabil Nadim Kassem – Suspended for three months on July 24, 2024, effective August 23, 2024 (258 N.J. 310) for violating RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence) (two instances); RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and comply with reasonable requests for information) (two instances); and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (four instances). Hillary K. Horton represented the OAE and respondent was pro se. Respondent was previously disciplined: Censured in 2008 and 2023; suspended for three months in 2020, temporarily suspended in 2023 and reprimanded in 2023.

Nabil N. Kassem - Disbarred on November 26, 2024, (259 N.J. 325) for violating RPC 1.1(a) (engaging in gross neglect) (two instances), RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence) (three instances), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to promptly comply with a client's reasonable requests for information) (six instances), RPC 1.15(b)

(failing to promptly deliver to the client or third person any funds or other property the client or third person is entitled to receive (three instances), RPC 5.1(b) (failing to make reasonable efforts to ensure that a lawyer, over whom the lawyer has direct supervisory authority, conforms to the Rules of Professional Conduct), RPC 5.5(a)(1) (engaging in unauthorized practice of law) (four instances), RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (eleven instances), RPC 8.4(b) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on a lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects) (four instances), and RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation). Christopher W. Goodwin represented the OAE and respondent appeared pro se. The respondent was previously disciplined: Censured in 2008 and 2023, suspended for three months in 2020 and reprimanded in 2023.

Devin Kennedy Kenney – Reprimanded on December 10, 2024, (259 N.J. 334) in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:29-9(a)(1), two counts of disorderly persons contempt, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:29-9(a)(2), and two counts of petty disorderly persons harassment, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:33-4(a), and for violating RPC 8.4(b) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on a lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects) and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice). Respondent was pro se. Darrell M. Felsenstein represented the OAE and respondent was pro se on a motion for final discipline granted by the DRB.

Nosheen Khawaja – Admonished on September 24, 2024 (Unreported) for violating RPC 1.15(d) (failure to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of R. 1:21-6). Timothy J. McNamara represented the OAE before the DRB and Scott B. Piekarsky represented the respondent. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

William J. Kohlhepp - Censured on February 7, 2024, (256 N.J. 365) for violating RPC 1.7(a)(2) (engaging in a concurrent conflict of interest), RPC 1.8(a) (engaging in an improper business transaction with a client), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Timothy J. McNamara represented the OAE, and respondent failed to appear. Respondent was previously disciplined: Censure in 2004.

2024 Disciplinary Case Summaries

Evan Jay Krame - Suspended for 18 months on April 9, 2024 (deferred until the respondent seeks reinstatement), (257 N.J. 30) following a motion for reciprocal discipline for violating RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation); and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice). Hillary K. Horton represented the OAE and Adolph J. Galluccio represented the respondent. The respondent was previously disciplined: Reprimanded in 2001.

Julie Anna La Van – Censured on April 8, 2024 (256 N.J. 615) following her guilty plea and conviction, in the Superior Court of New Jersey, to one count of disorderly persons obstructing the administration of law, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:29-1(a), one count of petty disorderly persons harassment, in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:33-4(a) that violates RPC 8.4(b) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on a lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects). Rachael Weeks represented the OAE on a motion for final discipline and John McGill, III represented respondent. Respondent was previously disciplined: Reprimanded in 2019 and censured in 2021.

Steven R. Lehr - Censured on September 5, 2024, (258 N.J. 401) for violating RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information) (nine instances), RPC 1.4(c) (failing to explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation) (generally, in all client matters in which he committed fee overreaching, and specifically, in connection with the Paylor-Koffi matter), RPC 1.5(a) (engaging in fee overreaching) (sixteen instances), and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice) (two instances). Timothy J. McNamara represented the OAE and Justin P. Walder and Charles R. Cohen represented respondent on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the Disciplinary Review Board.

Thomas M. Lenney - Reprimanded on January 2, 2024 (256 N.J. 354) for violating RPC 1.15(a) (engaging in negligent misappropriation of client funds and commingling), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of R. 1:21-6) and RPC 5.5(a)(1) (practicing law while administratively ineligible). Rachael Weeks represented the OAE and Respondent was pro se.

Mary Elizabeth Lenti – Suspended for three months on June 3, 2024, effective July 3, 2024, (257 N.J. 491) for violating RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to communicate with client) RPC 3.2 (failing to expedite litigation, RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (two instances), and RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation). Randi Fraiman Silverman represented District IIIB on the DRB 23-227 matter and Robert T. Belasco, Jr. represented District IIIB on DRB 23-228. Respondent was previously disciplined: Censured in 2022.

Mary Elizabeth Lenti – Suspended for three months on a certified record on September 24, 2024, consecutive to respondent's current three-month suspension, and until further order of the Court, effective October 4, 2024 (257 N.J. 493) for violating RPC 1.1(a) (engaging in gross neglect), RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to communicate with a client), RPC 1.4(c) (failing to explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions about the representation), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (two instances). William G. Wright represented District IIIB and respondent failed to appear. The respondent was previously disciplined: Censured in 2022, temporarily suspended in 2024 and suspended for three months in 2024.

Seth P. Levine – Disbarred on June 26, 2024 (258 N.J. 33) for violating 18 U.S.C. § 1349 (conspiracy to commit bank fraud), 15 U.S.C. §§ 78j(b) and 78ff and 17 C.F.R. § 240.10b-5 (securities fraud), RPC 8.4 (b) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer), RPC 8.14(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonest, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation). Rachael Weeks represented the OAE on a motion for final discipline and the respondent failed to appear. Respondent was previously disciplined: Temporarily suspended on August 17, 2022.

Christopher Santo Lipari - Suspended for three months on February 7, 2024, effective March 8, 2024, (256 N.J. 354) on a disciplinary stipulation for violating RPC 1.1 (a) (engaging in gross neglect), RPC 1.7(a)(2) (engaging in a concurrent conflict of interest), RPC 3.3(a)(1) (making a false statement of material fact to a tribunal), RPC 3.3(a)(5) (failing to disclose a material fact to a tribunal, knowing that the omission is reasonably certain to mislead the tribunal), RPC 4.2 (communicating with a person represented by

2024 Disciplinary Case Summaries

counsel), RPC 4.3 (failing to correct an unrepresented person's misunderstanding of the lawyer's role when dealing with the person on a client's behalf), RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation), RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice), and RPC 8.4(e) (stating or implying an ability to improperly influence a government agency or official or to achieve results by means that violate the Rules of Professional Conduct or other law). Amanda Figland represented the OAE and Robert Ramsey represented the respondent.

William J. MacNaughton – Censured on May 10, 2024 (257 N.J. 224) for violating RPC 1.1(a) (engaging in gross neglect), RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence), RPC 1.5(b) (failing to set forth in writing the basis or rate of the legal fee), RPC 3.2 (failing to expedite litigation and treat with courtesy and consideration all persons involved in the legal process) (two instances), and RPC 3.5(c) (engaging in conduct intended to disrupt a tribunal). Joao F. Magalhaes appeared before the DRB for District XB and respondent appeared pro se.

Timothy Joseph McIlwain - Reprimanded on July 2, 2024 (258 N.J. 29) for violating RPC 1.15(a) (commingling client and personal funds), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6), and RPC 5.5(a)(1) (engaging in the unauthorized practice of law – failing to maintain liability insurance while practicing law via a limited liability company, as Rule 1:21-1B(a)(4) requires). Amanda Figland represented the OAE and Robert Ramsey represented respondent in a disciplinary stipulation filed with the DRB. Respondent was previously disciplined: Suspended for one month in 2023. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

Edward J. McKenna, Jr. - Admonished on September 4, 2024 (256 N.J. 507) for violating RPC 1.15(a) (negligently misappropriating escrow funds). Jennifer Iseman represented the OAE and respondent was represented by Edward Washburne on a Motion for Discipline by Consent granted by the DRB.

Joshua F. McMahon – Suspended for one year on February 2, 2024 (effective March 4, 2024), (256 N.J. 356) for violating RPC 3.2 (failing to treat all persons involved with the litigation process with courtesy and consideration) (two instances); RPC 4.4(a) (engaging in conduct that has not substantial purpose other than

to embarrass, delay, or burden a third person) (two instances); RPC 8.2(a) (making a statement with reckless disregard for the truth or falsity thereof concerning the qualifications of a judge) (two instances); and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice). Darrell M. Felsenstein, Assistant Ethics Counsel represented the OAE and Respondent was pro se.

John J. Mensching - Reprimanded on June 6, 2024, (257 N.J. 497) for violating RPC 1.15(b) (failure to promptly disburse funds to an entitled party) and RPC 1.15(d) (failure to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6). Corsica D. Smith represented the OAE and respondent appeared pro se on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

Andrew L. Monteleone – Reprimanded on July 22, 2024, (258 N.J. 175) on a disciplinary stipulation for violating RPC 1.15(a) (commingling personal funds with client funds) and RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of R. 1:12-6). Rachael L. Weeks represented the OAE and Kenneth Ralph represented respondent.

Nickolas C. Mourtos -Suspended for one year on March 14, 2024, effective April 15, 2024 (256 N.J. 500) for violating RPC 1.7(a)(2) (engaging in a conflict of interest); RPC 1.16 (a)(1) (failing to withdraw from a representation when required to do so); and RPC 8.1 (b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Elizabeth A. Rice appeared before the Supreme Court for the OAE and respondent did not appear.

Anthony M. Orlando - Censured on March 18, 2024 (256 N.J. 502) for violating RPC 1.4(b) (failing to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from a client), RPC 1.15(b) (failing to promptly deliver funds to a third party), RPC 5.5(a)(1) (engaging in the practice of law while ineligible), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) Ryan J. Moriarty represented the OAE and respondent was pro se on a Stipulation of Discipline by Consent accepted by the DRB. Respondent was previously disciplined: Temporarily Suspended on April 8, 2020.

Anthony M. Orlando - Suspended for a period of two years on March 22, 2024, effective April 21, 2024 (256 N.J. 512) for violating RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of

2024 Disciplinary Case Summaries

Rule 1:21-6) (two instances), RPC 5.5(a)(1) (engaging in the practice of law while suspended) (two instances), RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities), and RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation) (two instances). Ryan J. Moriarty represented the OAE and respondent was pro se on a Disciplinary Stipulation filed with the DRB. Respondent was previously disciplined: Temporarily suspended in April 2020 and censured in 2024.

Dale S. Orlovsky – Suspended for three-months on June 6, 2024, effective on July 6, 2024, (257 N.J. 499) for violating RPC 1.7(a)(2) (engaging in a concurrent conflict of interest), RPC 1.15(b) (failing to promptly disburse funds to an entitled party), and RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6). Corsica D. Smith represented the OAE and Respondent appeared pro se on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB. The respondent was previously disciplined: Temporarily suspended in 2012 and suspended for two years in 2012.

Theodore Oshman – Reprimanded on December 11, 2024 (259 N.J. 359) for violating RPC 1.15(a) (negligently misappropriating client funds), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6), and RPC 5.5(a)(1) (knowingly practicing law while administratively ineligible). Rachael Weeks represented the OAE and respondent was pro se on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Trust Overdraft Notification Program.

Raymond Charles Osterbye – Suspended for six months on July 22, 2024, effective August 21, 2024, (258 N.J. 179) for violating RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6); RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (two instances); and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice). Hillary K. Horton represented the OAE and respondent was pro se. Respondent was previously disciplined: Reprimanded in 2020 and 2022.

Dennis J. Oury - Disbarred on April 3, 2024 (256 N.J. 613) for violating RPC 5.5(a)(1) (practicing law while suspended), RPC 8.4(b) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer), RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving

dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation), and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice). Ryan J. Moriarty appeared before the Supreme Court for the OAE and Respondent was pro se. Respondent was previously disciplined: Suspended for three years in 2016, retroactive to November 17, 2009.

Michael Keith Parmelee - Reprimanded on January 2, 2024, (256 N.J. 132) for violating RPC 1.7(a)(2) (engaging in a concurrent conflict of interest); RPC 1.8 (e) (providing financial assistance to a client in connection with pending or contemplated litigation); RPC 1.15(b) (failing to promptly deliver funds to an entitled party); and RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6). Corsica D. Smith represented the OAE and Petar Kuridza represented respondent on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB.

Joan Othelia Pinnock - Suspended for three years on June 20, 2024 (257 N.J. 604) for violating RPC 1.1(a) (committing gross neglect) (three matters), RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence) (three matters), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to respond to reasonable requests for information) (three matters), RPC 1.5(b) (failing to set forth in writing the basis or rate of the legal fee) (two matters), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to maintain financial records as required by Rule 1:21-6), RPC 1.16(a)(1) (failing to withdraw from a representation when required to do so) (seven matters), RPC 1.16(d) (failing to provide reasonable notice of termination of representation due to suspension and failing to promptly surrender papers or unearned fees to the client) (two matters), and RPC 5.5(a)(1) (engaging in the unauthorized practice of law) (eight matters). Amanda Figland represented the OAE and E. Carr Cornog, III represented the respondent on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB. Respondent was previously disciplined: Reprimanded in 2013, suspended for 3 months in 2019, and temporarily suspended in 2019.

Michael A. Policastro - Reprimanded on October 7, 2024 (258 N.J. 490) for violating RPC 4.2 (engaging in improper communication with a person represented by counsel). Corsica D. Smith represented the OAE and Respondent appeared pro se on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB.

Lora M. Privetera – Admonished on April 30, 2024 (Unreported) for violating RPC 1.6(a) (failing to maintain confidential client information). Michel A.

2024 Disciplinary Case Summaries

Paulhus, Esq., represented District IIIA and Robert E. Ramsey represented the respondent. Respondent was previously disciplined: Admonition in 2012.

Paul R. Rajan - Censured on August 13, 2024, (258 N.J. 354) for violating RPC 1.15(a) (negligent misappropriation of client funds) and RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6). Colleen L. Burden represented the OAE and Glynn J. Dwyer represented the respondent on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

Joseph Rakofsky – Suspended for one year on May 3, 2024 (effective June 2, 2024), (257 N.J. 180) for violating RPC 1.6(a) (failing to maintain confidential client information); RPC 1.16(d) (failing to protect a client’s interests upon termination of representation); RPC 3.1 (engaging in frivolous litigation-three instances); RPC 3.2 (failing to treat all persons involved with the litigation process with courtesy and consideration); RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation-three instances); and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice-four instances). Darrell M. Felsenstein, Assistant Ethics Counsel represented the OAE and Robert E. Ramsey, Esq. represented respondent. The respondent was previously disciplined: Censured in 2015.

Michael T. Rave - Suspended for an indeterminate period (effective October 30, 2024), (258 N.J.453) for violating N.J.S.A. 2C:24-4(b)(5)(b)(iii) (third-degree endangering the welfare of a child by possessing items depicting the sexual exploitation or abuse of a child; N.J.S.A. 2C:14-3(b) (fourth-degree criminal sexual contact with a minor; and RPC 8.4(b) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on a lawyer’s honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects). Hillary Horton represented the OAE and Robert E. Dunn represented respondent on a motion for final discipline granted by the DRB.

Joseph Ricigliano, Jr. – Censured on August 22, 2024, (258 N.J. 388) for violating RPC 1.15(b) (failing to promptly deliver funds to the client or a third party), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of R.1:21-6), RPC 5.5(a)(1) ((failing to file a certificate of insurance with the Clerk of the Supreme Court as required by R.1:21-1A(b)), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Rachael

L. Weeks represented the OAE and Raymond Londa represented the respondent on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB. Respondent was previously disciplined: Reprimanded in 2020.

Spencer B. Robbins - Censured on December 10, 2024 (259 N.J. 335) for violating RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6) and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Jennifer Iseman represented the OAE and respondent was pro se. Respondent was previously disciplined: Admonished in 2004 and 2015. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

Richard Donnell Robinson – Reprimanded on January 29, 2024 (256 N.J. 328) on a certified record for violating RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (two instances). Seth N. Broder represented District IIIB. Respondent was previously disciplined: Temporarily suspended in 2023.

Richard Donnell Robinson – Censured on October 7, 2024 (257 N.J. 125) for violating RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence) and RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and to comply with reasonable requests for information). Stephen A. Addezio, II appeared before the DRB for District IIIB and respondent waived appearance. Respondent was previously disciplined: Temporarily suspended in 2020 and reprimanded in 2024.

David S. Rochman – Admonished on March 22, 2024 (256 N.J. 514) for violating RPC 1.5(b) (failing to set forth in writing the basis or rate of the legal fee). Lynda L. Hinkle appeared before the DRB for District IV and Mark S. Kancher appeared for the respondent. The respondent was previously disciplined: Reprimanded in 2010.

Diane L. Rohrman – Disbarred on November 26, 2024 (259 N.J. 324) following respondent’s conviction in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Court of Common Pleas of Bucks County, for second-degree theft by unlawful taking, in violation of 18 Pa. C.S. § 3921(a), second-degree identity theft, in violation of 18 Pa. C.S. § 4120(a), third-degree access device fraud, in violation of 18 Pa. C.S. § 4106(a)(1)(iv), and third-degree computer trespass, in violation of 18 Pa. C.S. § 7615(a)(4), and for violating RPC 8.4(b) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer’s honesty,

2024 Disciplinary Case Summaries

trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer). Hillary K. Horton represented the OAE and respondent was pro se on a motion for final discipline granted by the DRB.

David L. Rosenthal – Suspended for three months on a certified record on October 18, 2024, effective November 17, 2024, (258 N.J. 516) for violating RPC 1.1(a) (engaging in gross neglect), RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and to comply with reasonable requests for information), RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities), RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation), and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice). Robert H. Siegel handled the matter for District IX and respondent failed to appear.

Joseph A. Rutigliano - Reprimanded on July 2, 2024 (258 N.J. 25) for violating RPC 1.15(a) (negligently misappropriating entrusted client funds), RPC 1.15(d) failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6), and RPC 5.3(a) and (b) (failing to supervise a nonlawyer assistant). Saleel Sabnis appeared before the DRB for the OAE and Jeffrey G. Garrigan represented the respondent. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

Laura M. Rys - Suspended on a certified record for two years on April 8, 2024, effective on May 8, 2020 (256 N.J. 617) for violating RPC 5.5(a)(1) (practicing law while suspended) and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Corsica D. Smith represented the OAE on a certification of default and respondent was pro se. Respondent was previously disciplined: Temporarily suspended since April 25, 2016, suspended for six months in 2020, and suspended for one-year in 2020.

Rodrigo Sanchez – Reprimanded on May 17, 2024, (257 N.J. 357) for violating RPC 1.15(a) (negligently misappropriating entrusted client funds) and RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6). Darrell M. Felsenstein represented the OAE and Ariel Alvarez represented respondent. The respondent was previously disciplined: Censured in 2010 and reprimanded in 2013. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Trust Overdraft Notification Program.

Stephen N. Severud - Disbarred on October 7, 2024 (258 N.J. 488) for the knowing misappropriation of escrow funds in violation of

RPC 1.15(a) and the principles of In re Wilson, 81 N.J. 451 (1979) and In re Hollendonner, 102 N.J. 21 (1985), as well violations of RPC 1.15(a) (engaging in negligent misappropriation and failure to safeguard funds) (four instances), RPC 1.15(a) (commingling), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6), RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities), RPC 8.4(b) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer), RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation). HoeChin Kim appeared before the Supreme Court for the OAE and respondent was pro se. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Trust Overdraft Notification Program.

Laurence R. Sheller - Reprimanded with conditions on June 5, 2024 (257 N.J. 495) for violating RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6) and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Jennifer Iseman represented the OAE and respondent was pro se on a Motion for Discipline by Consent granted by the DRB.

Paul J. Sica - Disbarred by consent on November 26, 2024, (259 N.J. 327) Respondent acknowledged that he was aware that the OAE alleged that he knowingly misappropriated client trust account funds, and that if he went to a hearing on that matter, he could not successfully defend herself against those charges. Saleel V. Sabnis represented the OAE and Donald Lomurro represented the respondent. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

Brian J. Smith – Censured on a certified record on July 2, 2024 (258 N.J. 27) for violating RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities)(two instances); and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice). Hillary K. Horton represented the OAE and respondent was pro se. The respondent was previously disciplined: Suspended for one year in 2022 and suspended for six months in 2023.

Royce W. Smith – Reprimanded on May 10, 2024 (257 N.J. 227) for violating RPC 5.5(a)(1) (practicing law while ineligible); RPC 8.1(a) (knowingly making a false statement of material fact to disciplinary authorities); RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities); RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in

2024 Disciplinary Case Summaries

conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation); and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice). Michael S. Fogler represented the OAE and respondent was pro se. The respondent was previously disciplined: Temporarily suspended in 2021 and censured in 2022.

Annmarië P. Smits - Reprimanded on August 13, 2024, (___ N.J. ___) for violating RPC 1.15(a) (negligently misappropriating client funds) and RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21- 6). Timothy J. McNamara represented the OAE and Kim D. Ringler represented respondent on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the Disciplinary Review Board. The respondent was previously disciplined: Censured in 2021. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

Marc A. Spielberg – Suspended for three months on a certified record on October 31, 2024, (258 N.J. 551) for violating RPC 1.1(a) (engaging in gross neglect), RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to communicate with client), RPC 1.16(d) (failing to protect the client's interest upon termination of representation), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Blake R. Laurence handled the matter for the District IIIA Ethics Committee and respondent failed to appear. Respondent was previously disciplined: Reprimanded in 2022; Temporarily Suspended in 2020.

Francis X. St. John – Censured on June 13, 2024 (257 N.J. 576) for violating RPC 1.15(a) (failing to safeguard client funds), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (two instances). Leighann Reilly appeared before the DRB for the OAE and Robert E. Ramsey appeared for the respondent. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Trust Overdraft Notification Program.

Robert J. Stack- Suspended for one year on February 7, 2024, effective March 8, 2024 and consecutive to the two-year suspension that was ordered by the Court on September 12, 2023 (256 N.J. 368) for violating RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence); RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and to comply with reasonable requests for information); RPC 1.6(a) (failing to maintain confidential information); RPC 1.16(d) (failing to protect a client's interest upon termination of the representation); RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with

disciplinary authorities) (two instances); and RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation). David W. New represented District XB and respondent was pro se. Respondent was previously disciplined: admonition on February 25, 2019; temporary suspension on November 19, 2020; public reprimand on September 14, 2022; and suspension for twenty-four months on September 13, 2023, effective October 6, 2023.

Robert J. Stack - Disbarred on May 2, 2024 (257 N.J. 178) for violating RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and to comply with reasonable requests for information), RPC 1.5(b) (failing to set forth in writing the basis or rate of the legal fee), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities) (two instances). Ryan J. Moriarty appeared before the Supreme Court for the OAE. Respondent did not appear. Respondent was previously disciplined: Admonished on February 25, 2019; temporarily suspended on November 19, 2020; reprimanded on September 14, 2022; suspended for two years on October 6, 2023; and suspended for one year on March 8, 2024.

Stelios Stoupakis - Disbarred by consent on July 29 2024, (258 N.J. 250) A review of Respondent's bank records showed that he transferred a client's funds to his own personal banking account for his own use. Respondent returned the client's funds by using the funds belonging to another client. Respondent also admitted to accepting payments from clients to his personal Venmo account and not transferring the funds to the law firm's account. Respondent acknowledged the OAE possessed evidence of knowing misappropriation and if he went to a hearing on these matters, he could not successfully defend himself against those charges. Christopher W. Goodwin represented the OAE and Respondent appeared pro se.

Joshua Louis Thomas - Suspended for two years on January 29, 2024 (effective February 28, 2024), (256 N.J. 326) following a motion for reciprocal discipline for violating RPC 1.1(a) (engaging in gross neglect) (three instances); RPC 1.1(b) (engaging in a pattern of neglect) (three instances); RPC 1.3 (engaging in lack of diligence) (three instances); RPC 3.1 (engaging in frivolous litigation); RPC 3.2 (failing to expedite litigation) (three instances); RPC 3.3(a)(1) (making a false statement of material fact to a tribunal) (two instances); RPC 3.4(d) (failing to comply with discovery requests); RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation) (two instances); and RPC 8.4(d)

2024 Disciplinary Case Summaries

(engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice) (three instances). Hillary Horton and Michael Fogler represented the OAE, and Respondent was pro se.

David E. Tider - Censured on January 9, 2024 (256 N.J. 171) for violating RPC 8.4(b) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer). Amanda Figland represented the OAE and Mark D. Garfinkle represented the Respondent on a Disciplinary Stipulation filed with the DRB. Respondent was previously disciplined: Censured in 2017.

John Edward Toczydlowski - Permanently barred from future plenary or pro hac vice admission on March 22, 2024, (256 N.J. 508) following his nolo contendere plea and conviction for second-degree misdemeanor unlawful dissemination of intimate images, contrary to 18 Pa. C.S. § 3131, and third-degree misdemeanor harassment, contrary to 18 Pa. C.S. § 2709(a)(4), in violation of RPC 8.4(b) (committing a criminal act that reflect adversely on a lawyer's honest, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects). Corsica D. Smith represented the OAE on a motion for final discipline and respondent was pro se.

Bernice Toledo - Suspended for one year on March 22, 2024, effective April 21, 2024, (256 N.J. 510) following a motion for reciprocal discipline for violating RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation); and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice). Hillary Horton represented the OAE and Adolph J. Galluccio represented the respondent.

Robert Wachtel - Reprimanded on May 17, 2024, (257 N.J. 359) for violating RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6) and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Corsica D. Smith represented the OAE and respondent appeared pro se on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Trust Overdraft Notification Program.

Matthew T. Wait – Reprimanded on August 13, 2024 (258 N.J. 357) for violating RPC 1.15(a) (negligent misappropriation of client funds) and RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of R.1:21-6). Diane M. Yandach represented the OAE and Robert

Ramsey represented the respondent on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

Christopher M. Walrath - Reprimanded on May 1, 2024, (257 N.J. 177) for violating RPC 1.7(a)(2) (engaging in a conflict of interest), RPC 1.8(a) (engaging in a prohibited business transaction with a client), RPC 4.1(a)(1) (making a false statement of material fact to a third party), and RPC 8.4(c) (engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation). Timothy J. McNamara represented the OAE and John E. Hogan represented respondent on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the Disciplinary Review Board.

Mary E. Warner – Reprimanded on March 8, 2024 (256 N.J. 468) following her guilty plea and conviction in the Superior Court of New Jersey to fourth-degree criminal contempt in violation of N.J.S.A. 2C:29-9(a), driving while under the influence of alcohol in violation of N.J.S.A. 39:40-50 (third offense), and operating a motor vehicle while license is suspended in violation of N.J.S.A. 39:3-4(d) (second offense). This misconduct constituted a violation of RPC 3.4(c) (knowingly disobeying an obligation under the rules of the tribunal); RPC 8.4(b) (committing a criminal act that reflects adversely on a lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects); and RPC 8.4(d) (engaging in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice). Michael S. Fogler represented the OAE and respondent was pro se.

Bruce K. Warren, Jr. – Suspended for six months on February 7, 2024, effective March 8, 2024 (256 N.J. 363) for violating i) RPC 1.2(a) (failing to abide by a client's decisions concerning the scope and objectives of representation), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to communicate with a client), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirement of Rule 1:21-6) in a credit reporting suit for one client and ii) RPC 8.1(a) (making a false statement of material fact to disciplinary authorities), RPC 8.4(c) (conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation), and RPC 8.4(g) (engaging, in a professional capacity, in conduct involving discrimination – sexual harassment) in a post-judgment matrimonial matter for a second client. HoeChin Kim represented the OAE and respondent was pro se. Respondent was previously disciplined: Reprimanded in 2013 and admonished in 2021.

2024 Disciplinary Case Summaries

Marc A. Weinberg – Censured on September 24, 2024 (258 N.J. 449) for violating RPC 1.1(a) (committing gross neglect) (three instances), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and failing to respond to reasonable requests for information) (four instances), RPC 1.4(c) (failing to explain a matter such that a client can make informed decisions) (four instances), RPC 1.5(b) (failing to set forth in writing the basis or rate of the legal fee), and RPC 1.5(c) (failing to set forth in writing the basis or rate of the contingent legal fee). Christopher L. Soriano appeared before the DRB for District IV and Teri S. Lodge appeared for the respondent.

Robert P. Weinberg - Reprimanded on February 7, 2024, (256 N.J. 360) for violating RPC 1.15(a) (comingling business funds with trust funds), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6); and RPC 5.3(a), (b), and (c) (failing to supervise a nonlawyer employee). Colleen L. Burden represented the OAE before the DRB and William O'Connor represented the respondent. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

Mark Williams – Admonished on May 28, 2024 (Unreported) for violations of RPC 1.15(a) (two instances – negligent misappropriation of client funds and comingling) and RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of R.1:21-6). Rachael L. Weeks appeared before the DRB for the OAE and respondent was pro se. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Trust Overdraft Notification Program.

Frederick Ayoob Win – Admonished on June 24, 2024 (Unreported) for violation of RPC 1.5(b) (failing to set forth in writing the basis or rate of the legal fee). Naomi B. Collier represented District XI and respondent was pro se.

Henry F. Wolff, III - Reprimanded on December 27, 2024, (2024 NJ LEXIS 1176) for violating RPC 1.8(a) engaging in improper business transaction with a client), RPC 1.15(a) (negligently misappropriating client funds), RPC 1.15(b) (failing to promptly disburse funds to a client or third party), and RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6). Saleel V. Sabnis represented the OAE and Anthony C. Gunst, IV represented the respondent on a motion for discipline by consent granted by the DRB. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Random Audit Compliance Program.

Marcel R. Wurms - Censured on a certified record on May 10, 2024 (257 N.J. 230) for violating RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence) (two instances), RPC 1.4(b) (failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and failing to comply with reasonable requests for information) (two instances), RPC 1.4(c) (failing to explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions about the representation) (two instances), RPC 1.5(b) (failing to set forth in writing the basis or rate of the legal fee) (three instances), RPC 1.16(d) (failing to protect the client's interests upon termination of representation and failing to surrender the client's file) (two instances), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Amanda Figland represented the OAE and respondent failed to appear.

John T. Wynn - Suspended for three months on March 8, 2024, effective April 8, 2024 (256 N.J. 465) for violating RPC 1.1(a) (committing gross neglect), RPC 1.3 (lacking diligence), RPC 1.5(a) (committing fee overreaching), RPC 1.15(a) (comingling funds), RPC 1.15(d) (failing to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of Rule 1:21-6), and RPC 8.1(b) (failing to cooperate with disciplinary authorities). Timothy J. McNamara represented the OAE and Marc D. Garfinkle represented Respondent. This matter was discovered solely as a result of the Trust Overdraft Notification Program.