

**IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL, : No. 3049 Disciplinary Docket No. 3  
: :  
Petitioner : No. 174 DB 2023  
: :  
v. : Attorney Registration No. 89111  
: :  
J. CONOR CORCORAN : (Philadelphia)  
: :  
Respondent :

**ORDER**

**PER CURIAM**

**AND NOW**, this 30<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2024, upon consideration of the Recommendation of the Three-Member Panel of the Disciplinary Board, the Joint Petition in Support of Discipline on Consent is granted, and J. Conor Corcoran is suspended on consent from the Bar of this Commonwealth for a period of 18 months. Respondent shall comply with the provisions of Pa.R.D.E. 217 and pay costs to the Disciplinary Board. See Pa.R.D.E. 208(g).

A True Copy Nicole Traini  
As Of 09/30/2024

Attest:   
Chief Clerk  
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

**BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF THE  
SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL, Petitioner	: No. 3049 DD 3 : : 174 DB 2023 : : Atty. Reg. No. 89111 : : (Philadelphia County)
v.	
J. CONOR CORCORAN, Respondent	

**JOINT PETITION IN SUPPORT OF DISCIPLINE ON CONSENT  
PURSUANT TO Pa.R.D.E. 215(d)**

Petitioner, the Office of Disciplinary Counsel (“ODC”), by Thomas J. Farrell, Chief Disciplinary Counsel and Michael D. Gottsch, Disciplinary Counsel, and Respondent, Conor J. Corcoran, Esquire (“Respondent”), through his attorney, Samuel C. Stretton, Esquire, respectfully petition the Disciplinary Board in support of discipline on consent, pursuant to Pennsylvania Rule of Disciplinary Enforcement (“Pa.R.D.E.”) 215(d), and in support thereof state:

**PARTIES TO DISCIPLINE ON CONSENT**

1. Pursuant to Pa.R.D.E. 207, ODC, whose principal office is situated at Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel, Pennsylvania Judicial Center, Suite 2700, 601 Commonwealth Avenue, P.O. Box 62485, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, 17106, is invested with the power and duty to

**FILED  
07/19/2024  
The Disciplinary Board of the  
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania**

investigate all matters involving alleged misconduct of an attorney admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and to prosecute all disciplinary proceedings brought in accordance with the provisions of the Enforcement Rules.

2. Respondent was born on April 11, 1977, is currently 47 years old, and was admitted to the Bar of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on October 23, 2002. Respondent is on active status in Pennsylvania, and his last registered address is 2601 Pennsylvania Ave Ste 501, Philadelphia, PA 19130.

3. Respondent is subject to the disciplinary jurisdiction of the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court.

4. Respondent has no prior record of discipline.

5. Respondent's affidavit pursuant to Pa.R.D.E. 215(d), stating, *inter alia*, his consent to the recommended discipline, is attached as Exhibit A.

#### **SPECIFIC FACTUAL ALLEGATIONS ADMITTED**

6. On August 27, 2015, Thomas Siderio ("Siderio") signed a contingent fee agreement in which he retained Respondent to represent him "concerning my police brutality case against any prospective defendant[.]"

7. The attorney's fee was 33% of any gross recovery.

8. That agreement pertained to police brutality to which Siderio allegedly had been subjected.

9. That agreement did not pertain to any other legal matter.

10. On March 1, 2022, Siderio's then-12-year-old son, Thomas J. Siderio ("TJ") was shot and killed by a Philadelphia police officer.

11. On March 3, 2022, Respondent, purporting to represent Siderio, Sr. (TJ's father), filed a Writ of Summons naming Siderio "individually, and as Administrator of the Estate of Thomas Siderio" as the plaintiff.

12. Respondent's writ omitted TJ's mother, Desirae Frame.

13. Respondent had not met with or spoken with Siderio before filing the Writ of Summons. Respondent admitted the following in his DB-7

Statement of Respondent's Position:

... I was unable to communicate with Mr. Siderio on that date, because I have never served as criminal counsel for Mr. Siderio, and therefore was not on SCI Coal Township's lists for approved attorney correspondence, in-person visitation, and/or telephone or Zoom calls as of that date.

I filed the Writ of Summons in the third matter [arising from TJ's death] on March 3, 2022, and the following morning, on March 4, 2022, I drove to SCI Coal Township [where Siderio was an inmate] to attempt direct communication with Mr. Siderio about the third matter [arising from TJ's death] and the litigation of the same, on behalf of himself and T.J.'s

estate.

Upon arrival at the prison, I was informed by the prison guard at the lobby front desk that, as I was not criminal counsel for Mr. Siderio (and therefore not on any attorney visitation list), that I could not speak with Mr. Siderio, and that Mr. Siderio would have to request that I be placed on the attorney visitation list.

\* \* \*

14. Siderio had not retained Respondent with respect to any matters arising from TJ's death.

15. Further, at the time Respondent filed the Writ of Summons, no estate had been raised for TJ and there was no administrator for his estate.

16. Knowing the facts set forth in the two preceding paragraphs, Respondent nonetheless represented to the court that Siderio was the administrator of TJ's estate, and implicitly, that Respondent represented him.

17. Respondent did not speak with Siderio or obtain Siderio's authorization to file the Writ of Summons.

18. On March 10, 2022, a week after filing the Writ of Summons, Respondent filed a Petition for Probate and Grant of Letters Testamentary, purportedly on Siderio's behalf, seeking to have Siderio appointed as the sole administrator of TJ's estate.

19. In the section of the Petition where the petitioner is required to attest that "Petitioner(s), after a proper search has/have ascertained that Decedent left no will and was survived by the following spouse (if any) and heirs," Respondent listed only Siderio and omitted TJ's mother, Ms. Frame, even though Respondent was aware of her existence and her right to serve as the administrator, the co-administrator, or to renounce in favor of another.

20. Respondent's Petition for Probate and Grant of Letters Testamentary has never been granted.

21. Following TJ's death, numerous lawyers, including Respondent, were vying to obtain Siderio as a client in connection with TJ's death.

22. On or about April 22, 2022, Respondent furnished Siderio with a contingency fee agreement that Respondent requested he sign, pursuant to which Siderio would retain Respondent "with regard to any and all investigation(s), negotiation(s) for settlement and/or litigation concerning the murder of my son, T.J. Siderio, against any prospective defendant[.]"

23. That proposed agreement called for an attorney's fee of 25% of any gross recovery.

24. Siderio never signed that proposed agreement.

25. Siderio informed Respondent orally that he had not called Respondent or hired Respondent to represent him in connection with TJ's death.

26. Nearly two months after filing the Writ of Summons, purportedly on Siderio's behalf, Respondent was still *attempting* to secure Siderio as a client.

27. By letter to Shaka Johnson, Esquire dated March 11, 2022, referencing Estate of TJ Siderio v. Mendoza, et al., Phila. C.C.P., March 2022, No. 0587, Respondent stated:

It is my understanding that you have been communicating with my client, Thomas Siderio, during the course of my representation of his interests in the above captioned matter, arising from the death of his son, TJ.

I sincerely hope my understanding is wrong, as I believe such behavior would constitute a violation of *inter alia* Rule 4.2 of the Pa. Rules of Professional Conduct.

Bob Mongeluzzi (who represents the interests of Desirae Frame, TJ's mother) is litigating the matter with me. All interested parties accordingly have the benefit of counsel.

Accordingly, if I am correct, please be advised that if you contact my client, or any members of his family with regard to the above captioned matter any further, I will initiate *inter alia* proceedings with the Disciplinary Board.

28. Respondent's letter misrepresented his status as Siderio's lawyer.

29. By letter to Respondent dated May 5, 2022, Siderio stated "There's multiple lawyers who want this case. 1 lawyer just offered me 20%. ... If you can beat 20% let my dad know, I need you to sign it and it has to state for trial [of] the whole case."

30. Siderio never entered into a fee agreement with Respondent relating to the death of his son TJ.

31. On or about May 25, 2022, Respondent sent Siderio a Renunciation form for him to sign which would renounce his right to administer TJ's estate and would designate Kristen L. Behrens, Esquire of Dilworth Paxson LLP as the administratrix of TJ's estate.

32. Siderio never signed the renunciation that Respondent sent him.

33. By letter dated June 14, 2022, Ronald A. Clearfield, Esquire, informed Respondent that Siderio had retained Clearfield to represent him regarding the death of his son, TJ.

34. Clearfield attached a contingent fee agreement, dated June 2, 2022, signed by Siderio on that date, and notarized, which stated:

I hereby appoint the Law Offices of Ronald A. Clearfield & Associates as my attorneys to prosecute



a claim for personal injuries against City of Philadelphia and Edsaul Mendoza or any other parties who shall be liable. The Claimant is Thomas Siderio for an accident/incident that occurred on March 1, 2022.

35. In his June 14, 2022 letter to Respondent, Clearfield further:
- a. informed Respondent that it had come to his attention that despite having no agreement with Siderio regarding representation in connection with TJ's death, Respondent may have taken action on Siderio's behalf;
  - b. requested that Respondent cease and desist any and all action, including statements, legal filings, communications with counsel, and communications with any and all defendants; and
  - c. requested that Respondent withdraw, without prejudice, the complaint filed under docket number 220300587.

36. The docket number referenced by Clearfield refers to the civil action that Respondent had initiated by filing the Writ of Summons on March 3, 2022, purporting to represent Siderio and TJ's estate.

37. Even if Respondent believed that Siderio would engage Respondent to represent him in connection with TJ's death, Mr. Clearfield's

letter to Respondent put Respondent on notice that Siderio had not retained Respondent and had not authorized Respondent to act on his behalf.

38. On June 16, 2022, Respondent attended a case management conference. Respondent never advised the court that no estate had been raised for TJ and that Siderio had not been appointed as the administrator of TJ's estate.

39. In the civil action, docket number 220300587, Respondent named as the plaintiff "Thomas Siderio, individually and as the Administrator of the Estate of Thomas Siderio."

40. Siderio is not, and never has been, the Administrator of TJ's estate.

41. Siderio never retained Respondent to represent him or TJ's estate nor authorized Respondent to file the Writ of Summons.

42. Respondent told Siderio that by virtue of his August 27, 2015 fee agreement with Respondent for his police brutality case, he was under contract with Respondent to represent him in connection with TJ's death.

43. The 2015 contingency fee agreement pertained only to the police brutality case involving Siderio (which had occurred years before the case involving TJ and his estate).

44. That fee agreement did not and could not bind Siderio to retain Respondent for any potential future action.

45. On June 17, 2022, Respondent filed a petition in the Orphans' Court Division of the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas requesting that the court award a citation to Siderio to show cause why he should not be adjudicated an incapacitated person and have a plenary guardian of his estate appointed.

46. On that same day, Respondent filed a motion to defer case number 220300587 pending the appointment of a guardian for Siderio and to have such guardian substituted as the plaintiff in the case.

47. In that motion Respondent stated: "Plaintiff has been represented by undersigned counsel since 2015 pursuant to a contingency fee agreement ("CFA") regarding matters including but not limited to police brutality[.]"

48. In the motion to defer, Respondent also asserted:

Thomas Siderio is believed by Petitioner and other persons who have had contact with him to be suffering from diagnosed and/or undiagnosed cognitive deficits, mental impairments, and/or drug addiction, and/or possibly other physical or mental impairments, which render him incapable of taking effective action with respect to the management of his assets and/or his person. ... Thomas Siderio is unable to manage his legal and financial affairs and

property. Thomas Siderio receives oral and written information concerning his affairs assets [sic], but is unable to comprehend and, therefore, to act upon the information due to his condition, which has almost entirely obliterated his cognition and his ability to communicate about the same or his financial or legal affairs.

Respondent did not have a non-frivolous basis in either fact or law for making the above statements.

49. Respondent did not attach any expert medical report to support his claim that Siderio is legally incapacitated but Respondent did attach Siderio's confidential medical records without Siderio's authorization.

50. Unless and until there is a court finding of incapacity Siderio is presumed to be competent and is free to select counsel of his choice.

51. Respondent used Siderio's confidential medical information to Siderio's disadvantage.

52. Siderio's medical records constituted information relating to the prior representation within the meaning of Pennsylvania Rules of Professional Conduct 1.6(a) and 1.9(c)(1) and (2).

53. Respondent did not have Siderio's informed consent to reveal such information.

54. Respondent did not have Siderio's informed consent to use such information.

55. Respondent's revealing of such information was not impliedly authorized under RPC 1.6(b) or (c).

56. Respondent's revealing of such information was not necessary to comply with the duties stated in RPC 3.3.

57. Respondent did not reasonably believe that revealing such information was necessary for any purpose stated under RPC 1.6(c).

58. Respondent's use of such information was not permitted or required by the Rules of Professional Conduct.

59. Such information had not become generally known.

60. Respondent knew that Siderio was not incapacitated and was capable of making his own decisions. Nonetheless, in an attempt to gain the status of being Siderio's lawyer with respect to a wrongful death case, Respondent acted contrary to Siderio's (his former client's) best interests.

61. Siderio never expressly or impliedly authorized Respondent to disclose, nor consented to Respondent's disclosure of, any alleged impairments or of any disclosure whatsoever of Siderio's medical records.

62. On June 22, 2022, Siderio gave a statement under oath, before a court reporter, in which Siderio stated, *inter alia*, that:

- a. he did not authorize Respondent to file a suit on his behalf arising from TJ's death;

- b. he never retained Respondent to represent him in connection with TJ's death;
- c. Respondent told him that he was under contract with Respondent in connection with TJ's death based on the 2015 fee agreement from Siderio's police brutality case; and
- d. he did not call or hire Respondent; Respondent just showed up at the prison uninvited but Siderio did not meet with Respondent in person.

63. On June 29, 2022, Siderio, who has never been appointed as the administrator of TJ's estate, signed a notarized Renunciation of the right to administer TJ's estate and requested that Letters be issued to Kristen L. Behrens, Esquire.

64. On July 12, 2022, Letters of Administration were granted to Kristen L. Behrens to be the administratrix of TJ's estate.

65. On July 14, 2022, knowing that Siderio was not and never had been the administrator of TJ's estate, that the petition for a grant of letters to him (filed by Respondent) had not been granted, and that Respondent had not been retained and was not authorized to represent Siderio, Respondent nevertheless filed a complaint asserting counts for civil assault and

intentional infliction of emotional distress alleging that "Plaintiff is the Administrator of the Estate of Thomas Siderio, a/k/a T.J. Siderio ...."

66. Respondent filed that complaint notwithstanding that lawyers from Saltz, Mongeluzzi & Bendesky, P.C. ("SMB"), on behalf of Ms. Frame, warned Respondent against doing so because the complaint contained information they asserted was inaccurate and false.

67. Further, at the time Respondent filed the complaint, the Register of Wills had already informed Respondent that it would not appoint Siderio as administrator or co-administrator of TJ's estate because Siderio was incarcerated.

68. Respondent verified the complaint under penalty of perjury, subject to 18 Pa.C.S.A. § 4904 relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

69. Further, having knowledge that Ms. Frame, who was separately represented by SMB, would not "join" in the complaint, Respondent nevertheless stated in the complaint: "Plaintiff anticipates that Desiree [sic] Frame, young T.J.'s mother, will join the above captioned matter individually and/or as co-Administrator of the Estate, through the auspices of her counsel, Robert Mongeluzzi and Andrew Duffy of Saltz, Mongeluzzi, & Bendesky, P.C. and/or through a jointly selected third party Administrator, Kristen Behrens of Dilworth Paxson, in the near future ...."

70. Even though, at a case management conference held on June 16, 2022, the court had ordered that a complaint be filed within 30 days of that date, Respondent had never been authorized by the court, by Siderio, or by the Orphans' Court to act on behalf of Siderio.

71. Rather than file a complaint that Respondent had no authority to file, Respondent could have withdrawn the summons, dismissed the civil action without prejudice, or sought appropriate relief from the court.

72. On July 15, 2022, Kristen L. Behrens, Esquire, as "Administratrix of the Estate of Thomas Siderio Jr.," signed a contingent fee agreement/retainer appointing Saltz Mongeluzzi & Bendesky P.C. and the Law Office of Ronald A. Clearfield and Associates, P.C. as attorneys to prosecute, on behalf of TJ's estate, "a claim for personal injuries and/or civil rights violations against The City of Philadelphia, Police Officer Edsaul Mendoza and any and all other defendants arising out of the death of Thomas Siderio, Jr. on March 1, 2022."

73. On July 19, 2022, Respondent filed a motion to disqualify and remove the Law Offices of Ronald A. Clearfield & Associates, Saltz Mongeluzzi & Bendesky, P.C., and Kristen Behrens, Esquire in case number 220300587.



74. Respondent had no legal or factual basis to seek the disqualification of Ms. Frame's or Ms. Behrens's choice of attorneys.

75. In that motion, Respondent made numerous false assertions, including that he represented Siderio in the matter, and also revealed medical information that Respondent obtained in the course of his prior representation of Siderio (paragraphs 19-22 of the motion and Exhibit H thereto (attaching medical records of Siderio)).

76. On July 22 2022, Orphans' Court Judge Stella M. Tsai dismissed Respondent's petition to have Siderio declared an incapacitated person.

77. In her opinion accompanying her dismissal order, Judge Tsai recounted the contents of Siderio's May 5, 2022 letter to Respondent, and then noted that: on June 6, 2022, Siderio signed a contingent fee agreement with the Law Office of Ronald A. Clearfield & Associates to represent him in TJ's case; on June 14, 2022, the Law Office of Clearfield & Kofsky sent Respondent a cease and desist letter advising him that they were representing Siderio in TJ's case and requesting that Respondent take no further action in the matter; three days later, on June 17, 2022, Respondent filed his petition asking the court to adjudicate Siderio an incapacitated person and to have a plenary guardian of his estate appointed.

78. In dismissing Respondent's petition, Judge Tsai stated that "[t]he primary evidence cited by [Respondent] to demonstrate Mr. Siderio's alleged incapacities are his conclusory assertions to that effect. Notably, there is no medical evidence or other reliable expert evidence presented to support the Petition." Opinion at 6.

79. She further stated:

[Respondent's] own exhibits undermine his showing that Mr. Siderio is incapacitated. Mr. Siderio's May 5, 2022 letter to [Respondent] is clear and cogent. Mr. Siderio is aware that other lawyers are interested in representing him in the corollary civil action [over TJ's death], he lists several reasons why he is entertaining other offers of representation, and he even allows [Respondent] the chance to make him a better offer. Far from "obliterated" cognition [as Respondent alleged], Mr. Siderio exhibits "comprehension of the nature of his currently pending litigation." Beyond this, [Respondent] lends credence to the substance of Mr. Siderio's letter (and therefore, Mr. Siderio's capacity) by relying on it himself as evidence of third-party interference with his representation of Mr. Siderio in the corollary civil action. ...

... With scant, if any, evidence that Mr. Siderio is in fact incapacitated within the meaning of the law, [Respondent's] overarching concern over the disruptive effect of "vexatious efforts," "tortious interference," and "poaching" has little, if anything, to do with an adjudication of Mr. Siderio's capacity, but rather further indicates that [Respondent] filed this guardianship proceeding to preserve his role in the corollary civil action. ...

Given the factual record presented in the Petition, the Petition is demonstrably incomplete and fails to provide sufficient facts to proceed and is not instituted to benefit Mr. Siderio.

80. On July 25, 2022, Respondent filed a praecipe to withdraw his appearance in the civil action he had filed naming Siderio as the plaintiff (March 2022 No. 587, Case ID 220300587). Respondent noted that Siderio was being represented by other counsel who had entered their appearance on June 23, 2022.

81. By order dated August 15, 2022, Respondent's motion to disqualify and remove the other lawyers was denied.

82. On March 7, 2023, Respondent sent an email to Ron Clearfield, Andrew Duffy, and Mark Schiavo (of Dilworth Paxson LLP), with copies to Robert Mongeluzzi, Ben Hoffman (of Clearfield & Associates), Kristen Behrens, and Anthony Lopresti (of Clearfield & Associates), stating:

Dear Ron, Andrew and Mark:

I'm considering a lawsuit against your respective firms for claims of tortious interference, breach of contract, and civil conspiracy, arising from the TJ Siderio case.

83. Respondent has never filed the threatened lawsuit.

84. Respondent now accepts full responsibility for his misconduct, as described above.

85. If this matter were to proceed to a hearing, Respondent would testify that his misconduct in this matter was an aberration; that Respondent got carried away because of the magnitude of the potential attorney's fees that could be garnered from representing Mr. Siderio in a wrongful death case over the death of his son TJ. Respondent would testify that his misconduct in this case is not characteristic of the way Respondent practices law.

86. Respondent regrets his behavior and recognizes that it violated the Rules of Professional Conduct.

87. Respondent accepts full and complete responsibility for his actions.

88. Respondent is remorseful and understands that his actions caused harm to the public's trust and perception of the legal profession. He further understands that his attempt to have Mr. Siderio adjudged incapacitated was unethical and not in the best interest of Mr. Siderio; Respondent is remorseful for making such an attempt.

## **VIOLATIONS OF THE RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

89. By his conduct as set forth in paragraphs 6 through 83 above, Respondent acknowledges he violated the following Rules of Professional Conduct:

- a. RPC 1.2(a), which states that subject to paragraphs (c) and (d), a lawyer shall abide by a client's decisions concerning the objectives of representation and, as required by Rule 1.4, shall consult with the client as to the means by which they are to be pursued. A lawyer may take such action on behalf of the client as is impliedly authorized to carry out the representation. ...
- b. RPC 1.6(a), which states that a lawyer shall not reveal information relating to representation of a client unless the client gives informed consent, except for disclosures that are impliedly authorized in order to carry out the representation, and except as stated in paragraphs (b) and (c);
- c. RPC 1.6(d), which states that a lawyer shall make reasonable efforts to prevent the inadvertent or unauthorized disclosure of, or unauthorized access to, information relating to the representation of a client;

- d. RPC 1.9(c)(1), which states that a lawyer who has formerly represented a client in a matter or whose present or former firm has formerly represented a client in a matter shall not thereafter use information relating to the representation to the disadvantage of the former client except as the Rules of Professional Conduct would permit or require with respect to a client, or when the information has become generally known;
- e. RPC 1.9(c)(2), which states that a lawyer who has formerly represented a client in a matter or whose present or former firm has formerly represented a client in a matter shall not thereafter reveal information relating to the representation except as the Rules of Professional Conduct would permit or require with respect to a client;
- f. RPC 3.1, which states that a lawyer shall not bring or defend a proceeding, or assert or controvert an issue therein, unless there is a basis in law and fact for doing so that is not frivolous, which includes a good faith argument for an extension, modification or reversal of existing law;

- g. RPC 3.3(a)(1), which states that a lawyer shall not knowingly make a false statement of material fact or law to a tribunal or fail to correct a false statement of material fact or law previously made to the tribunal by the lawyer;
- h. RPC 4.1(a), which states that in the course of representing a client a lawyer shall not knowingly: (a) make a false statement of material fact or law to a third person;
- i. RPC 8.4(c), which states that it is professional misconduct for a lawyer to engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit or misrepresentation; and
- j. RPC 8.4(d), which states that it is professional misconduct for a lawyer to engage in conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice.

**JOINT RECOMMENDATION FOR DISCIPLINE OF  
AN EIGHTEEN-MONTH SUSPENSION**

90. Petitioner and Respondent jointly recommend that the appropriate discipline for Respondent's misconduct is a suspension for eighteen months.

91. Respondent hereby consents to the discipline being imposed upon him by the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

Attached to this Petition as Exhibit A is Respondent's executed Affidavit as required by Pa.R.D.E. 215(d)(1) through (4).

92. In support of the Joint Petition, the parties respectfully submit that the following mitigating circumstances are present:

a. Respondent accepts full responsibility for his misconduct and is remorseful;

b. Respondent has cooperated with Disciplinary Counsel in jointly agreeing to discipline on consent;

c. Respondent understands discipline is necessary and appropriate, and has expressed a willingness to accept discipline in the form of an eighteen-month suspension, requiring him to petition for reinstatement and demonstrate his fitness before resuming the practice of law;

d. Respondent has no history of discipline in over 20 years of practice prior to this matter;

e. Respondent did not receive undue pecuniary gain to the detriment of his client as a result of his conduct;

f. Thomas Siderio did not suffer financial harm from Respondent's misconduct, as he obtained representation of his choice and has not been prejudiced;



g. Respondent asserts that he has practiced without incident for 22 years. He has been very active as *pro bono* counsel for several civic and community organizations, which include The Poor People's Army, Hidden City Philadelphia, and CultureWorks Greater Philadelphia. He also has represented, *pro bono*, performing arts organizations, including White Box Theatre and Bratt Productions. Respondent has been active politically in the community and was a candidate for Judicial Office in 2013 in Philadelphia. If this case went to a hearing, Respondent would have a number of people from these organizations and from the community at large testify on his behalf as to his excellent reputation as a truthful and honest person, and as a peaceful and law-abiding person.

93. In Pennsylvania, there is no *per se* discipline for a particular type of misconduct; instead, each case is reviewed individually while being mindful of precedent and the need for consistency. ***Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Lucarini***, 472 A.2d 186, 190 (Pa. 1983).

94. Petitioner and Respondent previously submitted a Joint Petition in this matter recommending a suspension of two years, but with one year stayed. Respondent would not have had to petition for reinstatement. By Order dated June 18, 2024, this Court denied that motion. In its denial order,

the Court cited two cases— *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Marianne Sawicki*, No. 107 DB 2021 (D.Bd. Rpt. 9/15/2023)(S.Ct. Order 12/22/2023) (suspending an attorney for one year and one day after she insisted on representing a client on criminal charges, even though the client did not want the attorney’s representation; the attorney also falsely claimed that the client had diminished capacity), and ODC v. Gannon, *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Thomas Peter Gannon*, No. 123 DB 2018 (D. Bd. Rpt. 9/21/18) (S.Ct. Order 12/21/2018) (suspending an attorney for two years for engaging in abusive litigation tactics; the attorney had no prior disciplinary history in over 40 years of practice).

95. In light of the Court’s denial of the previous Joint Petition, to bring this case in line with the cases cited by the Court and other cases discussed below, the parties now consent to a suspension of eighteen months, which will require Respondent to demonstrate his fitness at a hearing prior to his resumption of the practice of law. The parties believe that their recommendation for a suspension of eighteen months is consistent with the cases cited by the Court and also with other cases involving similar misconduct where the respondents were suspended for periods ranging from one year and one day to two years, as discussed below:

a. In the first case cited by the Court, ***Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Marianne Sawicki***, No. 107 DB 2021 (D.Bd. Rpt. 9/15/2023)(S.Ct. Order 12/22/2023), the respondent, with no prior discipline in ten years of law practice, was suspended for one year and one day for violating RPCs 1.1, 1.3, 1.4(b), 1.16(a)(3), 1.16(d), 3.1, 3.3(a)(1), 4.2, 8.4(c), and 8.4(d). Sawicki injected herself into civil and criminal matters involving a woman named Barbara Jean Kissinger, who was already represented by counsel. Sawicki: a) advised Kissinger not to attend a criminal arraignment that a judge had specifically ordered her to attend; b) communicated with Kissinger even though Kissinger's lawyer had specifically told Sawicki not to communicate with her; c) filed a baseless petition in court in the civil matter, purportedly on behalf of Kissinger but actually on behalf of non-parties; Sawicki lacked authorization from Kissinger and at the time had not met or spoken with her, had not been retained by her, did not have her authorization to file anything, and had no first-hand knowledge regarding the facts set forth in the petition; d) continued to inject herself and purport to represent Kissinger, filing documents and making a court appearance in that effort, after the judge had specifically vacated an appearance Sawicki had entered on Kissinger's behalf in the criminal matter; and e) falsely claimed that her client had diminished capacity. The Board stated that "Ms. Kissinger expressly stated that she did not wish to be represented by [Sawicki] in her criminal matter and, immediately after the proceeding concluded, [Sawicki] informed Ms. Kissinger—both in writing and orally—that the attorney-client relationship was terminated relative to the civil and criminal matters. Yet, ... [Sawicki] continued to contact Ms. Kissinger and third parties and counsel. In fact, in November 2019, [Sawicki] entered her appearance on behalf of Ms. Kissinger in the civil lien matter and filed pleadings on Ms. Kissinger's behalf, even though the attorney-client relationship had been terminated." D.Bd. Rpt. at 42-43.

The Board determined that Sawicki refused to acknowledge her wrongdoing and that she failed to take responsibility for her actions or to show remorse. In fact, quite the opposite: she insisted throughout her disciplinary hearing that she had done nothing wrong and that her conduct was completely ethical. Significantly, the Board noted that Sawicki testified inconsistently at her disciplinary hearing, offering an ever-shifting narrative that was not credible. The Board further found

as an additional aggravating factor that Sawicki failed to consider the impact of her conduct on Kissinger and continued to badger Kissinger and meddle in her affairs. *Id.* at 47-50.

b. In the other case cited by the Court, ***Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Thomas Peter Gannon***, No. 123 DB 2018 (D. Bd. Rpt. 9/21/18)(S.Ct. Order 12/21/2018), the respondent, having no prior discipline, was suspended for two years for violations of RPCs 1.1, 1.16(a)(1), 3.1, 3.3(a)(1), 3.4(a), 4.4(a), 8.4(c), and 8.4(d). Gannon abused the court system over a period of eight years by filing multiple meritless and frivolous appeals. Gannon failed to preserve his client's appellate issues and, after the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania denied allocatur and the arguments were barred, Respondent continued his barrage of filings. He was disqualified by the Commonwealth Court and barred by the Supreme Court from representing the client because of his continued vexatious conduct. Yet he continued his pattern and practice of frivolous filings and appeals in contravention of court orders. Further, Gannon lied to a judge in court, stating that his client could not attend a hearing because he had been injured in a serious truck accident two weeks earlier. The client testified credibly that he had not been involved in any motor vehicle accidents in the prior two **years**.

The Disciplinary Board observed the following in its report and recommendation:

After being disqualified as [the client's] attorney, Respondent continued to hold himself out as being [the client's] attorney in the many pleadings and motions he filed in state court. His behavior was undeterred even after the Supreme Court issued a Rule to Show Cause why he should not be barred from submitting any further filings on [the client's] behalf. Respondent continued to misrepresent his role as [the client's] attorney on each court filing after these directives, in violation of RPC 8.4(c). D.Bd. Rpt. at 38.

The Disciplinary Board found multiple aggravating factors. Gannon's misconduct was not of short duration but rather spanned years. He continued making frivolous filings after he had been served with a Petition for Discipline. "Respondent's tepid assertion that he would have done something different 'if [he] knew then what [he] know[s] now,' is hollow and not indicative of sincere remorse." *Id.* at 39. And Gannon's "failure to pay monies owed to OJS resulting from his barrage of filings is evidence that he does not accept responsibility for his actions." *Id.* The Board determined that Gannon's aggravating factors outweighed his sole mitigating factor—having no record of discipline since his admission to the bar in 1976. *Id.*

c. In *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Joseph P. Maher*, No. 4 DB 2018 (D.Bd. Rpt. 12/14/2018)(S.Ct. Order 2/25/2019), the respondent was suspended for one year and one day for violating RPCs 1.1, 1.3, 1.7(a)(2), 1.16(a)(1), 3.3(a)(1), 4.1(a), 8.4(c), 8.4(d), and Pa.R.D.E. 203(b)(1), 203(b)(7), and 214(a). In a custody and relocation matter, the judge, Judge Sletvold, held Maher in criminal contempt for deliberately neglecting a court appearance (purportedly because he lacked a vehicle to get to court, a claim he had also made in a previous instance).<sup>1</sup> The judge also held Maher's client, Ms. Dreisbach, in contempt and imposed sanctions on her. Dreisbach retained a different lawyer, Attorney Cook, to handle the relocation aspect of the case. When questioned by a second judge, Judge Murray, Maher stated that the client, Ms. Dreisbach, was switching counsel because Maher might be a fact witness and Maher was the godfather of and babysat for Dreisbach's child. The judge opined several times that Maher had a conflict of interest and asked whether he would withdraw from representing Dreisbach. The judge directed Maher to not further act as Dreisbach's counsel pertaining to anything in the trial court or Superior Court, a directive which Maher understood. The judge then ordered that Maher's appearance on behalf of Dreisbach was withdrawn based on his conflict of interest, and that he was to refrain from making any filings on behalf of Dreisbach or acting as her counsel. Nevertheless, Maher then filed, on behalf of Dreisbach, a response to a rule to show cause with respect to a collateral order issue because it appeared the Superior Court lacked

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<sup>1</sup> Maher did not report his contempt conviction to ODC.

jurisdiction given that the contempt order against Dreisbach was immediately appealable but no notice of appeal had been filed within thirty days.

In the response that Maher filed on Dreisbach's behalf, he asserted that he and the other involved lawyers had decided it was best for Maher to handle to reply to the rule to show cause order, noting that he felt this was necessary "to explain the chaos and confusion ... that [the judge] had created from day one of her involvement in this matter." The Disciplinary Board determined that "Respondent's representation to the Superior Court that it has been decided between the three attorneys that it was best that Respondent handle Ms. Dreisbach's Reply was false and Respondent knew it to be false. Respondent never had a conversation with [the other two lawyers] as to which counsel should file Ms. Dreisbach's Reply and [Attorney] Cook never authorized Respondent to file the Reply." D. Bd. Rpt. at 11 ¶ 30. The Disciplinary Board further stated: "Respondent's filing of the August 31, 2016 response with the Superior Court was in open defiance of Judge Sletvold's July 22, 2016 Order and in direct contravention of Ms. Dreisbach's stated wishes on the record that it was best that Mr. Cook represent her to pre[v]ent further conflicts." *Id.* ¶ 31.

Maher had prior discipline of two informal admonitions, one of which involved violations of RPCs 1.9(a), 1.16(a)(1), and 8.4(d) arising from his misconduct in a custody matter where he breached his duty to a former client by representing another client with interests materially adverse to the former client without obtain the former client's consent, and where his failure to withdraw from representing the new client and his willful violation of a preclusion order resulted in the judge holding him in contempt. The Board concluded: "[Maher's] prior admonitions and the current disciplinary matter reflect a continuing pattern of disrespect for judicial authority. ... We conclude that [Maher's] prior discipline did not act as a deterrent to [his] penchant for disregarding court orders and procedures, underscoring the necessity for more severe discipline in the instant matter." D.Bd. Rpt. at 24.

d. In *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Alan Kane*, No. 77 DB 2021 (D.Bd. Rpt. 12/13/2022)(S.Ct. Order 3/8/2023), following a

disciplinary hearing, respondent Kane, having no prior discipline in 28 years of law practice, was suspended for one year and one day for, *inter alia*, violating RPCs 1.6(a), 1.6(d), and 1.6(e). The Board stated that Kane's actions in the matter were motivated by his own self-interest in maximizing his attorney's fee, rather than on achieving the best result for his client. D.Bd. Rpt. at 20. Further, "[Kane] failed to advise [his client] that she was under no obligation to renegotiate" Kane's fees, as he had been pressuring her to do. *Id.* at 21. Subsequently, Kane sued his client for *quantum meruit* and "gratuitously and unnecessarily revealed confidential, personal information concerning his client, which [the client] did not authorize." *Id.* at 21, 25. The Board also noted that Kane deflected all responsibility for his misconduct, showed no remorse, did not apologize for his actions, and did not recognize his wrongdoing, "raising doubts as to his fitness to practice law." D.Bd. Rpt. at 31

e. In *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Antoinette M. J. Bentivegna*, No. 156 DB 2002 (S.Ct. Order 7/15/2004), the respondent was suspended for two years for violating RPCs 1.1, 1.2(a), 1.4(a), 1.4(b), 1.5(a), 3.3(a)(1), 8.4(c), and 8.4(d). She engaged in serial filing of bankruptcy petitions and pleadings without authorization from her numerous purported clients. She engaged in a pattern of misrepresentations in making false representations to the purported clients and others, and her testimony at her disciplinary hearing was contradictory and not credible. She showed no remorse and did not comprehend that she had done anything wrong.

96. Office of Disciplinary Counsel notes the following with respect to the instant matter:

a. In contrast to some of the respondents in cases set forth above, Respondent did not violate court orders and did not persist in misconduct in contravention of court orders.

b. ODC accepts Respondent's averment that misconduct in this case was an aberration not characteristic of Respondent's practice of law in that Respondent, with respect to the facts and circumstances of this matter, "got carried away" and failed to restrain himself.

c. Respondent's misconduct in this case was isolated and not part of any pattern of misconduct.

d. ODC has no evidence to suggest that Respondent is likely in the future to commit any similar misconduct.

97. Unlike Sawicki and Gannon, Respondent in this matter has cooperated in the disciplinary process, admitted and acknowledged his unethical conduct, accepted responsibility, and is remorseful. Apart from that distinction, the parties submit that Respondent's misconduct is most similar to Sawicki's and not as egregious as Gannon's. Further, the parties submit that Respondent's conduct is no worse than that of Maher, who was suspended for one year and one day.

98. Based on the totality of the circumstances presented as more fully described and set forth above, the parties submit that discipline in the form of an eighteen-month suspension will adequately address Respondent's misconduct and maintain the integrity of the legal profession, while also taking into consideration Respondent's mitigating factors.



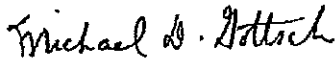
WHEREFORE, Petitioner and Respondent respectfully request that:

a. Pursuant to Pennsylvania Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement 215(e) and 215(g), a Three-Member Panel of the Disciplinary Board review and approve the Joint Petition in Support of Discipline on Consent and file a recommendation with the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania that Respondent receive an eighteen-month suspension; and


b. Pursuant to Pa.R.D.E. 215(i), the Three-Member Panel of the Disciplinary Board enter an order for Respondent to pay the necessary expenses incurred in the investigation and prosecution of this matter, and that under Pa.R.D.E. 208(g)(1) all expenses be paid by Respondent within 30 days after the notice of taxed expenses is sent to Respondent.

Respectfully and jointly submitted,  
OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL  
THOMAS J. FARRELL  
Chief Disciplinary Counsel


7/11/24  
DATE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael D. Gottsch, Esquire  
Disciplinary Counsel

7/18/2024  
DATE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
J. Conor Corcoran, Esquire  
Respondent

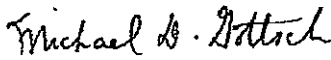
7/18/24  
DATE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Samuel C. Stretton, Esquire  
Counsel for Respondent


**VERIFICATION**

The statements contained in the foregoing *Joint Petition In Support of Discipline on Consent* are true and correct to the best of our knowledge or information and belief and are made subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S.A. §4904, relating to unsworn falsification to authorities.

7/11/24  
DATE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Michael D. Gottsch, Esquire  
Disciplinary Counsel

7/18/2024  
DATE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
J. Conor Corcoran, Esquire  
Respondent

7/18/2024  
DATE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Samuel C. Stretton, Esquire  
Counsel for Respondent

# EXHIBIT A

**BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF THE  
SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL, Petitioner	: No. 3049 DD3 : : 174 DB 2023 :
v.	: : Atty. Reg. No. 89111 :
J. CONOR CORCORAN, Respondent	: : (Philadelphia County)

**AFFIDAVIT UNDER RULE 215(d), Pa.R.D.E.**

Conor J. Corcoran, being duly sworn according to law, deposes and submits this affidavit consenting to an eighteen-month suspension, in conformity with Pa.R.D.E. 215(d), and further states as follows:

1. He is an attorney admitted to the Bar of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania on or about October 23, 2002.
2. He desires to submit a Joint Petition in Support of Discipline on Consent pursuant to Pa.R.D.E. 215(d).
3. His consent is freely and voluntarily rendered; he is not being subjected to coercion or duress, and he is fully aware of the implications of submitting this affidavit.
4. He is aware that there is presently pending a proceeding regarding allegations that he has been guilty of misconduct as set forth in the Joint Petition in Support of Discipline on Consent Pursuant to Pa.R.D.E. 215(d) to


which this affidavit is attached.

5. He acknowledges that the material facts set forth in the Joint Petition are true.

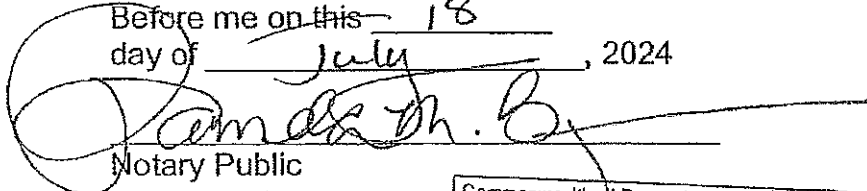
6. He submits this affidavit because he knows that if charges predicated upon the matter under investigation were filed, or continued to be prosecuted in the pending proceeding, he could not successfully defend against them.

7. He acknowledges that he is fully aware of his right to consult and employ counsel to represent him in the instant proceeding. He has retained, consulted, and acted upon the advice of Samuel C. Stretton, Esquire in connection with his decision to execute the Joint Petition.

It is understood that the statements made herein are subject to the penalties of 18 Pa.C.S.A. §4904 (relating to unsworn falsification to authorities).

  
Conor J. Corcoran, Esquire

Sworn to and subscribed <sup>th</sup>  
Before me on this 18  
day of July, 2024

  
Notary Public

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania-Notary Seal  
PAMELA M BRYAN, NOTARY PUBLIC  
PHILADELPHIA COUNTY  
MY COMMISSION EXPIRES OCTOBER 15, 2025  
COMMISSION NUMBER 1193259

**BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF THE  
SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL, Petitioner	: No. 3049 DD3 : : 174 DB 2023 : : Atty. Reg. No. 89111 : : (Philadelphia County)
v.	
J. CONOR CORCORAN, Respondent	

**CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE**

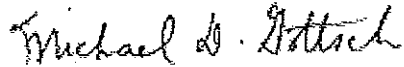
I hereby certify that I am this day serving the foregoing document upon all parties of record in this proceeding in accordance with the requirements of 204 Pa. Code §89.22 (relating to service by a participant).

**First Class Mail and Email, as follows:**

Samuel C. Stretton, Esquire  
103 South High Street  
P.O. Box 3231  
West Chester, PA 19381-3231

Strettonlaw.samstretton@gmail.com

Dated: 7/18/24



Michael D. Gottsch  
Disciplinary Counsel  
Office of Disciplinary Counsel  
District I Office  
1601 Market Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
(215) 560-6296

**CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE**

I certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the *Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania: Case Records of the Appellate and Trial Courts* that require filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.

Submitted by: Office of Disciplinary Counsel

Signature: Michael D. Gottsch

Name: Michael D. Gottsch, Disciplinary Counsel

Attorney No. (if applicable): 39421