

SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA

Case No. S98Y0414.

Atlanta January 23, 1998

The Honorable Supreme Court met pursuant to adjournment.

The following order was passed:

IN THE MATTER OF KAREN N. WARDLAW

This disciplinary matter is before the Court on the Petition for Voluntary Discipline of the respondent, Karen N. Wardlaw. The State Bar and the special master appointed by this Court to conduct an investigation recommend that the Court accept Wardlaw's Petition. Wardlaw admits violating Standard 24 (aiding a nonlawyer in the unauthorized practice of law) of Bar Rule 4-102 in connection with her failure to supervise her employee in the preparation of a will. Following the death of a friend, Wardlaw assisted her friend's husband in the administration of the estate and authorized her employee to revise a will for the husband in which Wardlaw was named as the executrix and primary beneficiary. Although Wardlaw was not aware of the husband's intention to name her in the revised will, Wardlaw's conduct constitutes a violation of a duty owed as a professional. In particular, by failing to supervise the preparation of a will by her legal secretary, who was not a licensed attorney, Wardlaw aided her employee in the unauthorized practice of law in violation of OCGA §15-19-51.

By engaging in this conduct, Wardlaw admits that she violated Standard 24 of Bar Rule 4-102. In her petition, filed pursuant to Bar Rule 4-227 (c), Wardlaw requests that this Court impose a Review Panel reprimand as an appropriate sanction in this case. The State Bar Rules state that a violation of Standard 24 of Bar Rule 4-102 may be punished by a public reprimand. In rendering its decision, this Court also considers the fact that Wardlaw has no prior disciplinary record and has cooperated fully with the disciplinary authorities, and the fact that she was a longstanding friend of the husband and wife involved to be mitigating circumstances in this case.


We have reviewed the record and agree with the State Bar and the special master that a Review Panel reprimand is an appropriate sanction in this case.

SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA

Clerk's Office, Atlanta



I hereby certify that the above is a true extract from
The minutes of the Supreme Court of Georgia
Witness my signature and the seal of said court hereto
Affixed the day and year last above written.

 , Chief Deputy Clerk