



# SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA

Case No. S03Y1017

Atlanta June 9, 2003

The Honorable Supreme Court met pursuant to adjournment.

The following order was passed.

## IN THE MATTER OF ROBERT E. KNOX, JR.

This disciplinary matter is before the Court on Respondent Robert E. Knox, Jr.'s Petition for Voluntary Discipline filed pursuant to Bar Rule 4-227 (b), prior to the State Bar's issuance of a Formal Complaint. Knox requests that he receive a Review Panel Reprimand, as recommended by the Investigative Panel of the State Disciplinary Board, for his violation of Standards 3; 4; and 45 of Bar Rule 4-102 (d). The maximum penalty for a violation of Standard 3, 4, or 45 is disbarment. The State Bar states on behalf of the Investigative Panel that it recommends that Knox receive a Review Panel Reprimand, pursuant to Bar Rule 4-102 (b) (4).

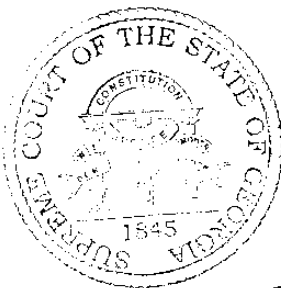
In his petition, Knox admits the following: Knox represented a client in a real estate transaction in which the client had contracted to purchase property located in McDuffie County, Georgia. The son of owners of the property had listed the property for sale with a local real estate agent and claimed to be acting on his father's behalf. Knox handled the closing of the transaction, including drafting, completing and filing all documents, and mailed the closing documents, including the warranty deed and owner's affidavit, to the son's address in Detroit, Michigan, where the real estate agent told Knox the property owners resided. The son returned the documents to Knox, but they were not witnessed and notarized and, when Knox telephoned the son, he told Knox that there had been no notary available but that his father had authorized him to execute the documents and he had signed the documents, including the deed and owner's affidavit, for the property owners. Then, on December 7, 2000, Knox witnessed the signatures on the deed and owner's affidavit; directed one of his staff members to notarize the signatures even though the staff member did not witness anyone sign the documents except for Knox; closed the real estate transaction; filed the deed as if it had been properly witnessed and notarized; and received a fee of \$150. However, the property

owners had not authorized the son to sign the documents and did not receive the approximately \$7,500 in proceeds from the sale.

Having reviewed the record, we agree with the State Bar that the imposition of a Review Panel Reprimand is appropriate in this case. In mitigation of discipline, we note that Knox has directed his counsel to make every reasonable effort to protect the surviving property owner, including seeking placement of the proceeds from the sale in trust for him and, that although the son has not yet agreed to place the proceeds in trust, Knox has instructed counsel to prepare a trust for the property owner with an amount equal to the proceeds of the sale with the property owner's great-nephew, with whom the property owner is said to reside, as trustee. We also note that Knox comes to the proceeding with an unblemished record; has served many civic, charitable, and church organizations in his county and region; and has served the public in many pro bono capacities.

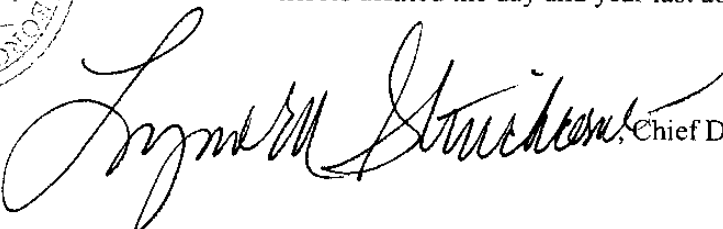
Accordingly, we accept Knox's Petition for Voluntary Discipline and hereby order that for his violation of Standards 3, 4, and 45 of Bar Rule 4-102 (d), Robert E. Knox, Jr. be administered a Review Panel Reprimand pursuant to Bar Rule 4-102 (b) (4) and 4-220 (b).

**SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA**  
**Clerk's Office, Atlanta**



I 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