



**SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA**  
Case No. S06Y1271

Atlanta September 18, 2006

The Honorable Supreme Court met pursuant to adjournment.

The following order was passed.

**IN THE MATTER OF GEORGE MICHAEL C. RANALLI**

This disciplinary matter is before the Court on the Report and Recommendation of the State Bar Disciplinary Board's Review Panel, recommending that Respondent George Michael C. Ranalli receive a letter of formal admonition as reciprocal discipline. See Rule 9.4 of Bar Rule 4-102 (d) of the Georgia Rules of Professional Conduct. Ranalli received a ninety-day suspension to be stayed subject to a one-year probation, with conditions, from the Supreme Court of Nevada on September 13, 2005 for improperly transferring funds from the firm's trust account to its operating account, which is a violation of Rule 1.15 (I) of Bar Rule 4-102 (d). Specifically, the Supreme Court of Nevada found that Ranalli's law firm received retainers from clients and properly placed those funds in the firm's trust account but that as the firm performed services for the clients, the firm failed to properly transfer funds from the trust account to the operating account. As a result, shortfalls occurred in the firm's operating account and Ranalli, without completing a proper accounting of funds in the trust account, transferred funds from the trust account to the operating account six times from September to December 2003 to cover payroll and other expenses of the firm. Within one to three weeks of each improper transfer, the funds were replaced and additional funds were received in the operating account. An audit of the firm's trust account indicated that Ranalli did not actually ever transfer any client or

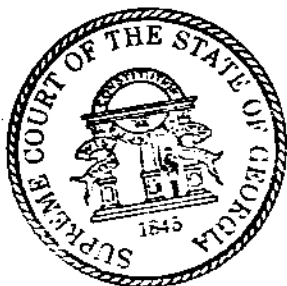
third party funds from his trust account to his operating account because the amounts transferred were always less than the amount of fees earned but not yet transferred properly to the operating account.

Ranalli acknowledged service of the Notice of Reciprocal Discipline and filed a Letter of Objection in December 2005 arguing that he had been disciplined in Nevada, that the problem no longer existed, and that accordingly reciprocal discipline was not required. The State Bar of Georgia did not respond to the Letter of Objection and did not make a recommendation as to an appropriate level of discipline. The Review Panel concluded that Ranalli failed to satisfy his burden to demonstrate that reciprocal discipline should not be imposed but did find that the discipline imposed by the Nevada Supreme Court did not correspond to a level of discipline in the Georgia Rules.

Rule 9.4 (b) (3) (v) (b) provides that less than identical discipline may be imposed when “the discipline imposed by the foreign jurisdiction exceeds the level of discipline allowed under these Rules.” Under the Georgia Rules, there is no equivalent to the discipline imposed by the Supreme Court of Nevada and accordingly, the Review Panel, considering the record of the Nevada proceedings, including mitigating factors, recommended that Ranalli receive a letter of formal admonition with a requirement for compliance with the conditions imposed by the Nevada Supreme Court and notice to the State Bar of Georgia concerning such compliance. The conditions imposed by the Nevada Supreme Court were that Ranalli complete ten hours of CLE (in addition to the hours required by Nevada discipline Rule SCR 210) with five hours devoted to trust account management and five hours

devoted to office management and Nevada Bar counsel must approve the selected courses; enter into a mentorship agreement for the one-year probation period with a mentor approved by Bar counsel, meet at least monthly with the mentor, and have the mentor provide quarterly reports to Bar counsel; pay \$7,500 to the Client Security Fund by the end of the one-year probation period; pay one-half of the State Bar's costs; and refrain from further misconduct during the one-year probation period.

After a review of the record, this Court agrees with the recommendation of the Review Panel. The Court notes in mitigation of discipline Ranalli's lack of prior discipline, sincere remorse, and cooperation with disciplinary authorities, and the fact that Ranalli reported himself to the Nevada State Bar. Accordingly, it is hereby ordered that Ranalli receive a Letter of Formal Admonition with a requirement for compliance with the conditions imposed by the Nevada Supreme Court and notice to the State Bar of Georgia concerning such compliance. Bar Rule 4-102 (b) (6).



**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