

SUPREME COURT OF WISCONSIN

In the Matter of Disciplinary Proceedings Against Sandra K. Coplien

2010 WI 109, 788 N.W.2d 376 · No. 2009AP916-D · Decided September 3, 2010

SUMMARY

The Wisconsin Supreme Court imposed reciprocal discipline on Sandra K. Coplien after the Illinois Supreme Court suspended her license for six months for professional misconduct. The court suspended her Wisconsin license for six months, ordered her to pay \$1,407.68 in proceeding costs, and required compliance with duties applicable to suspended attorneys.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Wisconsin
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Per Curiam
JURISDICTION	Wisconsin
DECIDED	September 3, 2010
DOCKET	2009AP916-D
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Attorney disciplinary proceeding seeking reciprocal discipline after the respondent failed to appear or contest the proceeding. The referee recommended a six-month suspension and payment of costs; no appeal was filed, so the Supreme Court reviewed the referee's report under SCR 22.17(2).
STANDARD OF REVIEW	Independent review of the referee's report and the record when no timely appeal is filed, with authority to adopt, reject, modify, or remand the referee's findings and conclusions under SCR 22.17(2).
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Wisconsin Supreme Court opinion
PARTIES	Office of Lawyer Regulation v. Sandra K. Coplien

TOPICS

[appellate procedure](#) [administrative law](#) [standard of review](#)

PRACTICE AREAS

[legal ethics](#) [attorney discipline](#) [reciprocal discipline](#) [appellate procedure](#)

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether the Wisconsin Supreme Court should review and adopt the referee's unchallenged findings and conclusions under SCR 22.17(2).
2. Whether Coplien was subject to reciprocal discipline in Wisconsin under SCR 22.22 based on her Illinois suspension.
3. What discipline and costs should be imposed in Wisconsin.

HOLDINGS

1. When no timely appeal is filed in an attorney disciplinary proceeding, the Wisconsin Supreme Court independently reviews the referee's report and may adopt the referee's findings and conclusions.
2. An attorney suspended by another jurisdiction for professional misconduct is subject to reciprocal discipline in Wisconsin under SCR 22.22, absent an applicable exception.
3. Failure to notify the Office of Lawyer Regulation within 20 days of the effective date of another jurisdiction's discipline constitutes misconduct under SCR 22.22(1).

KEY QUOTATIONS

“Upon our independent review of the record, we approve and adopt the referee's findings and conclusions.”
(¶ 2)

“By virtue of having been suspended by the Illinois Supreme Court for her violation of the Illinois Rules of Professional Conduct, Attorney Coplien is subject to reciprocal discipline in Wisconsin pursuant to SCR 22.22.” (¶ 11)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Coplien was admitted to practice in Wisconsin and Illinois. The Illinois Supreme Court imposed a six-month suspension based on her failure to inform a client about filings, failure to respond to petitions and communications, missed court dates, and failure to cooperate with Illinois disciplinary authorities. She did not notify Wisconsin's Office of Lawyer Regulation of the Illinois suspension within 20 days and did not contest the Wisconsin reciprocal-discipline proceeding.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Office of Lawyer Regulation filed a complaint seeking discipline identical to a six-month suspension imposed on Coplien by the Illinois Supreme Court. After Coplien failed to appear, the referee entered default-related findings, deemed the complaint's allegations admitted, and recommended reciprocal discipline and costs. The Wisconsin Supreme Court independently reviewed, approved, and adopted the referee's findings and conclusions.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- In re Sandra Kay Coplien, Illinois Supreme Court No. MR 22301, Commission No. 07CH45

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