

SUPREME COURT OF GEORGIA

In re Meaney

298 Ga. 136 (2015) · Decided November 16, 2015

SUMMARY

The Supreme Court of Georgia imposed a three-month suspension on James A. Meaney III as reciprocal discipline following his Tennessee suspension. Reinstatement in Georgia was conditioned on proof that Meaney had been reinstated to practice law in Tennessee.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Georgia
WRITING FOR THE COURT	All the Justices
JURISDICTION	Georgia
DECIDED	November 16, 2015
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	Reciprocal attorney-discipline proceeding arising from respondent's suspension in Tennessee.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The Court reviewed the record and the Review Panel's recommendation in the reciprocal-discipline proceeding.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published opinion; precedential
PARTIES	James A. Meaney III v. State Bar of Georgia

TOPICS

administrative law agency adjudication appellate procedure

PRACTICE AREAS

attorney discipline professional responsibility reciprocal discipline

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether reciprocal discipline should be imposed under Georgia Bar Rule 9.4(b) based on Meaney's Tennessee suspension.
2. Whether Georgia should impose a discipline different from the Tennessee discipline because the Georgia rules do not authorize a practice-monitor sanction and because Meaney argued that a three-month

suspension would be unduly severe.

3. What condition should govern Meaney's potential reinstatement to practice law in Georgia.

HOLDINGS

1. Meaney failed to establish any Rule 9.4(b)(3) ground warranting discipline different from the Tennessee discipline, so reciprocal discipline was appropriate.
2. Georgia imposed a three-month suspension because identical discipline was not possible where the Tennessee sanction included a practice monitor, a sanction not provided for by Georgia's rules.
3. Before seeking reinstatement in Georgia, Meaney must provide proof that he has been reinstated to practice law in Tennessee; the State Bar must submit a notice of compliance, after which the Court will grant or deny reinstatement.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Meaney was suspended from practicing law in Tennessee after continuing to practice while temporarily suspended for failing to satisfy continuing legal education requirements, pay a professional privilege tax, and respond to a disciplinary investigation. Tennessee imposed an 11-month-and-29-day suspension, with three months served actively and the remainder probated, and included a practice-monitor requirement. Meaney later complied with Tennessee's practice requirements but objected to reciprocal discipline in Georgia.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

The Review Panel of the State Bar of Georgia recommended a three-month suspension as reciprocal discipline after Meaney received an 11-month-and-29-day suspension in Tennessee, including three months of active suspension and the remainder on probation. Meaney objected to the notice of reciprocal discipline and argued that the recommended punishment was unduly severe. The Supreme Court of Georgia adopted the Review Panel's recommendation, imposing a three-month suspension conditioned on proof of reinstatement in Tennessee.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- In the Matter of Bounds, 294 Ga. 724 (755 SE2d 745) (2014)
- In the Matter of Arthur, 291 Ga. 658 (732 SE2d 86) (2012)