

SUPREME COURT OF WISCONSIN

Office of Lawyer Regulation v. Stephen M. Compton

Compton, 2013 WI 42 (Wis. 2013) · No. 2010AP1118-D · Decided May 17, 2013

SUMMARY

The Supreme Court of Wisconsin granted Stephen M. Compton reinstatement to practice law after reviewing a referee's report and finding that he satisfied the applicable reinstatement standards. Reinstatement was conditioned on continued participation in a Wisconsin Lawyers Assistance Program monitoring program for two years, and Compton was ordered to pay \$4,373.03 in proceeding costs.

CASE DETAILS

COURT	Supreme Court of Wisconsin
WRITING FOR THE COURT	Per curiam
JURISDICTION	Wisconsin
DECIDED	May 17, 2013
DOCKET	2010AP1118-D
DISPOSITION	other
PROCEDURAL POSTURE	The Wisconsin Supreme Court reviewed a referee's report and recommendation concerning Stephen M. Compton's petition for reinstatement of his Wisconsin law license.
STANDARD OF REVIEW	The court adopts a referee's findings of fact unless they are clearly erroneous and reviews conclusions of law de novo.
PRECEDENTIAL VALUE	Published Wisconsin Supreme Court opinion
PARTIES	Office of Lawyer Regulation v. Stephen M. Compton

TOPICS

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

PRACTICE AREAS

[legal ethics](#) [attorney discipline](#) [professional licensing](#)

QUESTIONS PRESENTED

1. Whether Compton established by clear, satisfactory, and convincing evidence that he satisfied the Wisconsin requirements for reinstatement of his law license.
2. Whether reinstatement should be conditioned on continued participation in a monitoring program.
3. Whether Compton should be required to pay the costs of the reinstatement proceeding.

HOLDINGS

1. Compton met his burden of proving by clear, satisfactory, and convincing evidence that he possessed the moral character to practice law, that resuming practice would not be detrimental to the administration of justice or subversive of the public interest, that his petition representations were substantiated, and that he had complied with the suspension order and applicable reinstatement requirements.
2. Reinstatement should be granted subject to the condition that Compton continue participating in a WisLAP monitoring program and comply with its conditions for two years from the date of the reinstatement order.
3. Compton was required to pay the full costs of the reinstatement proceeding, stated as \$4,373.03 as of March 11, 2013, within 60 days of the order.

KEY QUOTATIONS

“We agree with the referee that Attorney Compton has met his burden of proof with respect to all elements needed to justify his reinstatement.” (¶ 22)

“Stephen M. Compton shall continue to participate in a WisLAP monitoring program and he shall comply with all conditions imposed as part of that program for a period of two years from the date of this order.” (¶ 25)

“within 60 days of the date of this order, Stephen M. Compton shall pay to the Office of Lawyer Regulation the costs of this proceeding, which are \$4,373.03.” (¶ 26)

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

Compton was admitted to practice law in Wisconsin in 1992 and had previously received a public reprimand and a 60-day license suspension for professional misconduct. In 2009, he was convicted of felony heroin possession and felony bail jumping, leading to a summary suspension and then a two-year disciplinary suspension of his law license. During the suspension, he completed treatment, maintained sobriety, complied with monitoring and probation requirements, attended educational activities, and demonstrated rehabilitation.

PROCEDURAL HISTORY

Compton's license was summarily suspended in March 2010 following criminal convictions and was later suspended for two years, retroactive to the date of the summary suspension. He petitioned for reinstatement on March 12, 2012. After a public hearing, referee James J. Winiarski recommended reinstatement subject to continued monitoring and payment of proceeding costs, and the Office of Lawyer Regulation did not oppose the petition. The Wisconsin Supreme Court adopted the recommendation.

DISPOSITION

other

CASES CITED

- Public Reprimand of Stephen M. Compton, No. 2002-6
- In re Disciplinary Proceedings Against Compton, 2008 WI 3, 306 Wis. 2d 280, 744 N.W.2d 78
- In re Disciplinary Proceedings Against Compton, 2010 WI 112, 329 Wis. 2d 318, 787 N.W.2d 831
- In re Disciplinary Proceedings Against Eisenberg, 2004 WI 14, ¶5, 269 Wis. 2d 43, 675 N.W.2d 747

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