

# Public Discipline

These summaries are based on information provided by the Office of Lawyer Regulation (OLR), an agency of the Wisconsin Supreme Court. The OLR assists the court in supervising the practice of law and protecting the public from misconduct by lawyers. The full text of matters summarized can be located at <https://compendium.wicourts.gov/app/search>.

## Disciplinary Proceeding Against Bryant H. Klos

On Jan. 7, 2026, the Wisconsin Supreme Court publicly reprimanded Bryant H. Klos and ordered him to pay the cost of the disciplinary proceeding, which totaled \$8,378.50. *Disciplinary Proc. Against Klos*, 2026 WI 1.

In 1990, a woman died, leaving a life interest in various assets to her husband. In 2007, the husband died. In December 2010, Klos filed a petition for special administration, to open a probate matter to disburse the assets that had been part of the husband's life estate. The court appointed the

wife's nieces as special administrators.

Between the time of the filing and August 2013, little activity occurred on the case, apart from the court issuing several notices to close the estate and Klos filing several petitions to extend the time to close the estate.

In September 2013, the court issued an order approving the heirs' agreement as to how the assets should be divided. Klos worked on the matter in fits and stops between then and September 2023, at which time the Office of Lawyer Regulation (OLR) filed a complaint alleging Klos had violated SCR 20:1.3 regarding his handling of the estate. The estate remains open as of the writing of this summary.

The parties entered into a stipulation in which Klos pled no contest to a single count of a violation of SCR 20:1.3 and the parties agreed that certain mitigating and aggravating factors should be considered when determining sanctions. The OLR sought a 60-day suspension. Klos argued a public reprimand was appropriate. The referee assigned to handle the matter issued a report concluding there was an adequate factual basis to accept Klos' no-contest plea and recommended Klos be publicly reprimanded.

While the court found the OLR's pursuit of a 60-day suspension was "not unreasonable," it concluded a public reprimand was appropriate in this matter. The court specifically noted two mitigating factors: lack of prior discipline and lack of financial motive. Although Klos argued that his early acceptance of responsibility warranted a reduction in the amount of costs he should be ordered to pay, the court found no exceptional circumstances to justify a depart-

ture from the general rule in SCR 22.24.

Klos had no prior discipline.

## Public Reprimand of Joseph F. McDonald

The Office of Lawyer Regulation (OLR) and Joseph F. McDonald entered into an agreement for the imposition of a public reprimand, pursuant to SCR 22.09(1). A Wisconsin Supreme Court-appointed referee approved the agreement and issued the public reprimand on Dec. 29, 2025, pursuant to SCR 22.09(3).

The public reprimand is the result of McDonald's misconduct in two client matters. In the first matter, McDonald represented the plaintiff in a defamation and invasion-of-privacy action. The lawsuit named three defendants. One of the defendants was dismissed after the court found there was no vicarious liability for the actions of the other defendants. McDonald violated SCR 20:1.1 when he 1) failed to properly determine the filing deadline to reply to the remaining two defendants' counterclaims, resulting in default judgment; 2) failed to submit evidence in opposition to the defendants' motion for summary judgment; 3) submitted evidence that was not newly discovered in support of a motion to vacate summary judgment; and 4) failed to file a brief or submit evidence in support of a motion to vacate default judgment.

In the second matter, McDonald represented a client who had pled guilty to criminal trespass and aggravated battery with intention to cause great bodily harm and was being sued by the victim. McDonald failed to timely file an answer to the complaint, in violation of SCR 20:1.3. He also placed an advanced payment of fees into his business account without providing the notices required under SCR 20:1.5(g)(2) upon termination of the representation. McDonald filed a motion to withdraw from the case without giving reasonable notice to the client, in violation of SCR 20:1.16(d). Finally, McDonald violated SCR 20:3.3(a)(1) when he misrepresented in a brief the date to which the court had previously granted an extension of time to file a brief.

McDonald had no prior discipline. **WL**

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