

**THE FOLLOWING INFORMAL ADMONITION WAS ISSUED
BY BAR COUNSEL ON
December 27, 2006**

**Via Certified Mail 7160 3901 9849 0189 7413
& First Class Mail**

Re: ***In re Styles-Anderson, Esquire***
Registration No. 412158
Bar Docket No. 2005-D246

Dear Ms. Styles-Anderson :

This office has completed its investigation of the above-referenced matter. We find that your conduct reflected a disregard of certain ethical standards under the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct (the "Rules"). We are, therefore, issuing you this Informal Admonition pursuant to D.C. Bar Rule XI, §§ 3, 6, and 8.

Our office docketed this matter for investigation based upon the June 30, 2005 order of the Circuit Court of Raleigh County, West Virginia ("Circuit Court") revoking your *pro hac vice* admission as counsel for the defendant in *West Virginia v. Watts*, Case No. 04-F-321. In the order, the Circuit Court made findings of fact and conclusions of law and ordered you disqualified from further participation in the case as a result of your misconduct. The Circuit Court's order was upheld on appeal.

In its June 30, 2005 order, the Circuit Court found that on April 13, 2004, before you were admitted as *pro hac vice* counsel, you filed a petition for review of conditions of release on behalf of Mr. Watts. Then, on May 4, 2004, local counsel filed a motion for your admission *pro hac vice* which the Court granted the same day. Near the time of the defendant's May 17, 2005 trial date, the government filed a motion alleging improprieties by you. Specifically, the government alleged, and the Circuit Court found, *inter alia*, that you failed to obtain local counsel's signature on pleadings, subpoenas and discovery demands as required by local rules, and that you filed pleadings before another West Virginia judge on behalf of another attorney, not admitted to the West Virginia bar, who was appearing on behalf of your client's brother.

You respond by admitting that you made some "mistakes." You state that you have been working on the Watts case since December 2003. You state that you worked hard on the case and that local counsel knew of the motions that you filed on Mr. Watts' behalf. You acknowledge that you did not conform your conduct to local rules that require the signature of local counsel on all pleadings. You state that although local counsel was

aware of the pleadings, it would have been expensive and cumbersome to obtain her signature. You further state that you were not aware that your District of Columbia Bar license had been suspended at the time you applied for *pro hac vice* admission in West Virginia. You state that you had provided your credit card number to the District of Columbia Bar to pay your dues. You state that the judge in the other West Virginia matter was aware that you were not a West Virginia attorney and that you filed a motion to assist the other attorney who was updating his West Virginia Bar license.

As your conduct in the Watts case took place as part of your representation before a West Virginia tribunal, we look, pursuant to Rule 8.5(b)(1) of the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct, to West Virginia ethics rules.¹ We find a violation of West Virginia Rule 3.4(c) which states:

A lawyer shall not knowingly disobey an obligation under the rules of a tribunal except for an open refusal based on an assertion that no valid obligation exists.

We also find a violation of West Virginia Rule 5.5(a) which states:

A lawyer shall not practice law in a jurisdiction where doing so violates the regulation of the legal profession in that jurisdiction.

You violated these Rules by multiple improper actions. You state that you have worked as Mr. Watts' lawyer since December 2003, yet you did not enter your appearance until May 4, 2004.² You were aware that West Virginia requires the signature of local counsel on all pleadings and subpoenas. However, because of convenience and expense you intentionally violated this requirement. Furthermore, you filed a pleading in another case in which you had not been admitted *pro hac vice*, where there was no local counsel and where you had not made an explicit disclosure to the court of your status. Although the judge may have been aware that you were not a member of the West Virginia Bar, the judge was not aware that you had not applied to be admitted *pro hac vice* in the case before him.

¹ We note that many of the West Virginia ethics rules are similar, if not identical, to District of Columbia rules.

² We note that you wrote to the West Virginia Bar requesting *pro hac vice* admission on March 31, 2004.

Your decision to violate the West Virginia rules on *pro hac vice* admission put your representation of your client at risk and ultimately led the Circuit Court to disqualify you as your client's attorney. While your attempt to keep local counsel's fees down for the sake of the client may have been well intentioned, the ultimate result is that you provided a basis for the Circuit Court to discharge you from the case.

We do not find that we could prove, by clear and convincing evidence, Rule violations based upon the other findings of the Circuit Court.

This letter constitutes an Informal Admonition pursuant to D.C. Bar Rule XI, §§ 3, 6, and 8, and is public when issued. In deciding to issue this Informal Admonition, we have taken into consideration that (1) your misconduct occurred in the context of zealous advocacy; (2) you have a record of one prior disciplinary sanction; (3) your client and his family were satisfied with your representation; and (4) you fully cooperated with this investigation.

Please refer to the attachment to this letter of Informal Admonition for a statement of its effect and your right to have it vacated and have a formal hearing before a hearing committee. If you would like to have a formal hearing, you must submit a written request for a hearing to the Office of Bar Counsel, with a copy to the Board on Professional Responsibility, within 14 days of the date of this letter, unless Bar Counsel grants an extension of time. If a hearing is requested, this Informal Admonition will be vacated, and Bar Counsel will institute formal charges pursuant to D.C. Bar Rule XI, § 8 (b). The case will then be assigned to a Hearing Committee, and a hearing will be scheduled by the Executive Attorney for the Board on Professional Responsibility pursuant to D.C. Bar Rule XI, § 8 (c). Such a hearing could result in a recommendation to dismiss the charges against you or a recommendation for a finding of culpability, in which case the sanction recommended by the Hearing Committee is not limited to an Informal Admonition.

Sincerely,

Wallace E. Shipp, Jr.
Bar Counsel

Enclosure: Attachment to Letter of Informal Admonition

