



SUPREME COURT DISBARS ATTORNEY



News Wire

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CHEYENNE -- Robert Hampe can no longer practice law in Wyoming.

The state's highest court disbarred him, citing 13 sections of the Rules of Professional Conduct that Hampe had stipulated he violated.

The Wyoming Supreme Court had suspended the former Cheyenne man's license to practice law in 1999, following a slew of complaints by clients.

One of those clients was Janet Dalton, who hired Hampe to sue a Cheyenne nursing home over the death of her son.

Dalton had filed a complaint with the Wyoming State Bar over Hampe's actions in that lawsuit.

"While they were investigating the complaint, I couldn't say anything about it," Dalton said Wednesday from her home in Montana. "Now I can."

Dalton's son, Shannon Seigle, died in 1995 at Cheyenne Health Care Center. Dalton's suit claimed the facility was negligent because Seigle apparently choked on food being fed to him by machine.

The suit was settled out of court in 1997; because of a confidentiality agreement, the terms of the settlement were never made public.

While not disclosing the confidential details, Dalton said her family never received payment due them from the settlement. She said she blames Hampe.

"This is what I have been hoping for and living for," Dalton said. "It's been four years of fighting to get justice as far as making sure this man never practices law again."

Dalton wasn't Hampe's only dissatisfied client.

Two people filed malpractice suits against him for his behavior in their cases; both were divorce and/or child custody cases.

One of those clients was Sandra Nicklas Vickery, to whom Hampe paid a \$231,000 out-of-court settlement. Vickery said she hired Hampe to represent her in a child custody case, but instead, another man -- Charles Rawson -- represented her.

Rawson, however, had been disbarred in New Mexico several years before, and he was not licensed to practice law in Wyoming.

That's one of the many sections of the Rules of Professional Conduct that the Supreme Court cited in its order terminating Hampe's membership in the Wyoming State Bar. It also led to his 1999 suspension.

At that time, the court found Hampe had acted unethically in knowingly using a disbarred attorney after the rule banning such a practice went into effect in Wyoming.

An investigation by the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle also showed that several of Hampe's clients had filed complaints against him over billing issues. Some were settled in his favor, but not all were.

Hampe was also linked to an illegal collection agency, which was run at one time by Rawson.

In its termination order, issued earlier last week, the Supreme Court -- which admits attorneys to practice in Wyoming -- also cited rules governing competence, diligence, communication, fees, safekeeping property, declining representation, candor toward the court, fairness to opposing party and counsel, and misconduct, among others.

Hampe no longer lives in Wyoming. Court papers say he lives in Texas, and he has no intention of returning to Wyoming or practicing law here or elsewhere.

Court papers say Hampe has waived any right to ever seek reinstatement from his suspension, but if he does, he'll have to serve three more years of suspension.

Hampe was also ordered to pay costs to the Wyoming State Bar for his 1999 suspension and his termination.

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