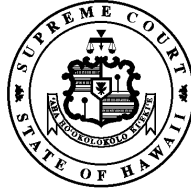


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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: Tuesday, December 6, 2022

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PRESS RELEASE

HONOLULU, HAWAI'I - On December 6, 2022 the Hawai'i Supreme Court accepted the resignation in lieu of discipline of Honolulu attorney Robert E. Chapman ("Chapman"). Arising from an ODC complaint received from a Deputy in the Attorney General's Civil Division, it was alleged that Chapman wrongfully attempted to lay claim to over \$2,000,000.00 in abandoned property held by the Hawai'i Department of Budget and Finance. The allegations were supported by the record in a lawsuit [*Anita Mei Lee Hsu v. Director of Finance*, Civ. No. 19-1-0484-03 (1st Cir. Haw.)] filed in the Circuit Court.

Following investigation by the ODC, Chapman was charged with multiple violations of the Hawai'i Rules of Professional Conduct. Rather than defend the charges, Chapman elected resignation in lieu of discipline under Rule 2.14 of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Hawai'i (RSCH). Following review of the charges, and Chapman's admissions, the supreme court found "egregious violations of Rules 1.2(a) [failure to consult with client], 1.9(c)(1) [use of confidential former client information to detriment of client], 3.1 [bringing action without basis], 3.3(a)(1) [false statement material fact to tribunal], 3.3(a)(4) [offering false evidence], 3.4(b) [falsification of evidence], 8.4(a) [attempt to violate HRPC], 8.4(b) [committing criminal acts], and 8.4(c) [engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit and misrepresentation] of the Hawai'i Rules of Professional Conduct."

In Hawai'i, a resignation in lieu of discipline is a disbarment for all purposes. See: RSCH Rule 2.14(d). Additionally, pursuant to a recent change in Hawai'i law, the attorney's admission to the charges is no longer confidential or sealed, but "shall not be used in any other proceeding except upon order of the [Hawai'i] supreme court ..." RSCH Rule 2.14(c).

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Upon entry of the December 6, 2022, disbarment order, Chapman shall not accept any new retainer or engage as attorney for another in any new case or legal matter of any nature. However, between December 6, 2022, and January 5, 2023, he may wind up and complete, on behalf of any client, all matters that were pending on December 6, 2022. During that time, he is required to promptly notify all of his clients, and any attorneys for any adverse party in any pending litigation, of his disbarment and consequent inability to act as an attorney. By January 5, 2023, Chapman shall surrender to all clients all papers and property to which the clients are entitled and any advance payments of fees that have not been earned. See: RSCH Rule 2.16.

Mr. Chapman's disbarment is effective 30-days after entry of the court's December 6, 2022 order. Chapman was admitted to the Hawai'i bar in 1980, and is a graduate of the University of Maryland, College of Law.

If there are any questions, please contact me at (808) 469-4026.

Case information: *ODC v. Robert E. Chapman*, SCPR-22-00000714

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