BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL, Petitioner	:	No. 71 DB 2026
	:	File No. C4-24-1121 & C4-25-911
v.	:	
	:	Attorney Registration No. 33350
JAMES S. VERGOTZ	:	
Respondent	:	(Allegheny County)

O R D E R

AND NOW, this 24th day of June, 2026, in accordance with Rule 208(a)(5), Pa.R.D.E., the determination by a Review Panel of the Disciplinary Board of the above captioned matter is accepted; and it is

ORDERED that the said JAMES S. VERGOTZ of Allegheny County, be subjected to a **PUBLIC REPRIMAND WITH CONDITION** by the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania as provided in Rule 204(b) and Rule 205(c)(8) of the Pennsylvania Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement.

Within thirty (30) days from the date of this Order, Respondent shall submit to the Board Prothonotary and Disciplinary Counsel proof that he has:

1. Informed the Co-Executors of the Belmont Estate of his inability to continue representing them and the need for them to hire successor counsel.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that Respondent shall be placed on PROBATION for a period of 18 months, subject to the following Conditions:

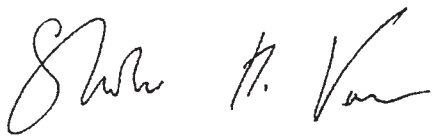
1. Respondent shall obtain a practice monitor, approved by the Office of Disciplinary Counsel;

The Practice Monitor shall do the following:

a. Meet with Respondent on a monthly basis, either in person, virtually, or by phone;
b. Obtain the status of each of Respondent's active cases;
c. Discuss with Respondent whether each case can be concluded within a reasonable time and, if not, establish a timeframe for Respondent to inform each client of the need to retain successor counsel;
d. Ensure that Respondent keeps each client informed of the status of their matters;
e. Where appropriate, ensure that Respondent informs each affected client of any limitation on Respondent's ability to continue the representation;
f. If Respondent has already informed any clients of his inability to continue a representation, determine whether he has also informed such client of the need to obtain successor counsel who can conclude their matter;
g. File quarterly written reports with the Disciplinary Board and the Office of Disciplinary Counsel in which the practice monitor will state:
    a. Whether the monitor has met with Respondent monthly;
    b. Whether Respondent has communicated with each of his clients about the status of each legal matter
    c. Where appropriate, whether Respondent has communicated with an affected client that he is unable to continue the representation;
    d. Whether Respondent has abided by the Rules of Professional Conduct; and
    e. whether the practice monitor has any concerns about Respondent's practice of law.

Costs shall be paid by the Respondent.

BY THE BOARD:



Board Chair

TRUE COPY FROM RECORD
Attest:



Marcee D. Sloan, Board Prothonotary
The Disciplinary Board of the
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

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	:	File Nos. C4-24-1121, C4-25-911
v.	:	
	:	Attorney Registration No. 33350
JAMES S. VERGOTZ, Respondent	:	(Allegheny County)

PUBLIC REPRIMAND

James S. Vergotz, you appear before the Disciplinary Board for the imposition of a Public Reprimand ordered by the Board on June 24, 2026. The Board ordered that you comply with the condition to inform the co-executors of the Belmont Estate of your inability to continue representing them and provide proof of such compliance to Office of Disciplinary Counsel ("ODC") and the Board. The Board further ordered that you be placed on probation for a period of 18 months with a practice monitor. By letter of June 24, 2026, the Board notified you of the disposition of this matter and further notified you of your opportunity to demand as of right the institution of formal charges within twenty days of the date of notification. You did not demand the institution of formal charges; therefore, you accept this public reprimand.

It is an unpleasant task to publicly reprimand one who has been granted the privilege of membership in the bar of the Commonwealth. Yet as repugnant as this task may be, it has been found necessary that you receive this public discipline.

Attorney Vergotz, the record sets forth your misconduct in the Belmont Estate matter. ODC received complaints against you from one of the co-executors and from an attorney for Disabled America Veterans (DAV), one of the charitable beneficiaries of the

estate.

In October 2020, you were retained on behalf of the co-executors. You took steps to move the estate toward its conclusion, but around 2022, you failed to file the necessary documents to finalize the estate and make the final distribution to the charitable beneficiaries of the estate. You failed to reply to numerous emails requesting status updates from DAV. In December 2022, you contacted DAV to advise you were experiencing health issues and would refocus in January 2023; however, you failed to provide the requested updates in January 2023.

Your lack of response prompted more emails and phone calls from DAV from February 2023 through June 2023, but you failed to respond and failed to provide updates and a timeline for distribution of the estate assets. In August 2023, a representative of DAV spoke with you on the telephone, at which time you advised that you knew you owed DAV an accounting and an additional distribution from the estate, and that you intended to complete the estate by the end of August 2023. This did not occur, prompting more calls to you from DAV in the fall of 2023. On the occasions when you were reached by telephone, you again referenced health issues and promised you would take action to finalize the estate.

DAV sent a certified letter to you in February 2024, requesting an accounting and an update and listing the 20 dates of its attempts to obtain information from you. You ignored the letter and failed to provide the information or finalize the estate. DAV sent another certified mailing in March 2024 and stated that if it failed to receive the financial information from you by April 2024, it had no choice but to refer your inaction to the Pennsylvania Office of the Attorney General. Yet again, you failed to reply. After more

unsuccessful attempts to contact you in August and September 2024, DAV through its attorney filed a complaint with ODC.

Beginning in January 2025, the co-executors of the estate, James Huckestein and Kimberly Charney, made numerous attempts to contact you, requesting status updates on the estate administration. You failed to reply and failed to otherwise provide requested information. In May 2025, you met with the co-executors and requested the estate account checkbook and ledger so you could complete the administration of the estate. The items were provided to you, yet thereafter you failed to reply to the co-executors' calls and failed to finalize the estate.

In November 2025, you contacted Mr. Huckestein and apologized for failing to complete the estate administration. You admitted that it had been a long time since you took on the representation and that you had failed to disburse to the eight charitable beneficiaries, including DAV, the balance of their bequests of the decedent's assets, and failed to timely disburse to the co-executors their share as their personal representative commission.

After receiving and investigating the complaints filed by Mr. Huckestein and DAV, ODC sent two separate DB-7 letters to you requesting your statement of position on the Belmont Estate matter. You submitted a counseled response to each and admitted nearly all of the allegations outlined by ODC. You recognized the delay in the estate administration. However, even after receiving and responding to the DB-7 letters, you took no action to finalize the estate.

By your conduct, you violated the following Rules of Professional Conduct ("RPC"):

1. RPC 1.3 – A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.
2. RPC 1.4(a)(2) – A lawyer shall reasonably consult with the client about the means by which the client's objectives are to be accomplished.
3. RPC 1.4(a)(3) – A lawyer shall keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the matter.
4. RPC 1.4(a)(4) – A lawyer shall promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.
5. RPC 1.4(b) – A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation.
6. RPC 1.15(e) – A lawyer shall promptly deliver to the client or third person any property, including but not limited to Rule 1.15 Funds, that the client or third person is entitled to receive and, upon request by the client or third person, shall promptly render a full accounting regarding the property; provided, however, that the delivery, accounting, and disclosure of fiduciary funds or property shall continue to be governed by the law, procedure and rules governing the requirements of fiduciary administration, confidentiality, notice and accounting applicable to the fiduciary entrustment.
7. RPC 1.16(a)(1) – A lawyer shall not represent a client or, where the representation has commenced, shall withdraw from the representation of a client if the representation will result in violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct or other law.

8. RPC 1.16(a)(2) – A lawyer shall not represent a client or, where representation has commenced, shall withdraw from the representation of a client if the lawyer's physical or mental condition materially impairs the lawyer's ability to represent the client.

Attorney Vergotz, your conduct in this matter is public. This Public Reprimand is a matter of public record and shall be posted on the Disciplinary Board's website at www.padisciplinaryboard.org.

It is the Board's duty to reprimand you for your misconduct. We note that you have a record of prior discipline consisting of an informal admonition imposed in 2025 for conduct similar to the instant matter. Please be aware that subsequent violations of the rules may result in further discipline and more severe sanctions. We sincerely hope that you will conduct yourself in such a manner that future disciplinary action will be unnecessary.

This concludes the reprimand.

S/Bryan Neft

Designated Member
The Disciplinary Board of the
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

Administered by a designated panel of three Members of The Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania on October 16, 2026.