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Suspended Providence lawyer McKenna must pay \$19,267 for misrepresenting plaintiffs

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PROVIDENCE, R.I. — A Superior Court judge has ruled former state representative and city Municipal Court Judge Keven A. McKenna — who had his law license suspended for a year by the state Supreme Court in late February — pay a Bristol resident \$19,267 for misrepresenting plaintiffs in filings he made on their behalf.

“Indeed, Mr. McKenna has not given any indication that he understands the nature of his transgressions nor has he expressed any regret for so much as a misunderstanding of the law or the facts,” read part of the March 6 decision by Superior Court Judge Patricia A. Hurst.

The sanction stems from a complaint filed by Ronald Blanchard that said McKenna, a longtime Providence lawyer, signed and filed papers in six cases without the consent of one or more of the individuals who McKenna named as plaintiffs and misrepresented their legal intentions, the decision reads.

Blanchard was the defendant in those cases, which began in 2005 when Theresa Wells, now deceased, attempted to block Blanchard from developing a property he and his wife purchased from Wells. McKenna was Wells' attorney. Additional lawsuits were filed after her 2006 death, and named in them were five plaintiffs who later said they didn't authorize McKenna to represent them.

Hurst ruled McKenna should pay some of Blanchard's attorney fees — \$19,267 of his requested \$38,000 — to “deter a plaintiffs' attorney from engaging in similar conduct in the future, as well as to reimburse the aggrieved party for money they were forced to expend defending against a plaintiff's filings.” Hurst didn't give the full amount because the judge said it was difficult to tell what legal work was solely done for this case versus the earlier suits.

“This court recognizes that a sanction in this amount would be a significant one (particularly for a small law firm or sole practitioner),” the 49-page ruling reads. “However, as indicative above, this court finds that the pattern evidenced by Mr. McKenna's conduct, his willingness to make repeated misrepresentations to the courts and other authorities of this state, and his lack of remorse, warrants a strong response.”

McKenna did not return The Journal's call Tuesday.

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Keven A. McKenna

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