

Salem Lawyer Disbarred over Financial Misconduct



Summary: A Massachusetts attorney was disbarred last month for mishandling client money.

Greed cast a spell over a Salem, Massachusetts attorney, who was disbarred recently over financial misconduct.

According to *Salem News*, attorney William P. Corbett had his license revoked last month for faulty record-keeping, misappropriating his clients' funds, and misleading state bar officials. He had been engaged in misconduct with two cases.

The first case involved a client named Douglas Nystedt. Nystedt had hired Corbett because he had discovered that his brother had died but that the death was allegedly hidden by attorney Earl Munroe, who later had his law license suspended for mishandling Munroe's estate. Corbett reached a \$50,000 settlement, and he asked his client if he could borrow \$35,000. His client agreed.

Corbett allegedly used the borrowed money to partially reimburse another client, and he promised to give Nystedt the remaining funds of \$15,000 and the rest at a later date.

However, the problem was that Corbett only gave his client \$7,500, and he told the Board of Bar Overseers during his trial that he had spent the rest of his client's money on Christmas gifts. Nystedt fired Corbett shortly after the first payment and Corbett told the Board that he had felt entitled to keep the borrowed money because of the firing.

The second case where Corbett mishandled client funds involved Connie Siegel-Dennis. She had hired him for a personal injury case after she had been hurt in an auto accident.

In 2011, Siegel-Dennis was awarded a \$500,000 settlement, and she received a portion, the rest going to fees and future expenses for other related lawsuits. Within months, however, the expense funds were gone because Corbett had transferred some of it to his firm's operating account.

Corbett's client received another check from the settlement for \$50,000 in August 2012. Instead of informing her, however, he kept the money and spent it. In 2013, Corbett was brought to justice and his license was suspended. Only then did Siegel-Dennis learn about the \$50,000 missing check.

The decision to disbar Corbett was handed down by Supreme Judicial Court Justice Margot Botsford, who has since retired. During the trial, Corbett claimed that he had depression and ADHD and that was why he committed his bad acts. The Massachusetts state board members did not find a connection between the conditions and his behavior, which they said was "intentional and dishonest."

Salem News also reported that another local attorney was disbarred for financial misconduct.

Attorney Leon Gelfgatt was involved with a mortgage fraud scandal. The attorney and licensed real estate broker admitted to seeking out soon-to-be-sold expensive properties in the Multiple Listing Service Property Information Network. He would then forge signatures on documents to try to get mortgage payments on those homes to be transferred to an account he controlled. The scheme apparently didn't work, and he was swiftly caught and disbarred.

- Related: [California Lawyer Disbarred for Misappropriating \\$65,000](#)
- Related: [Florida Attorney Charged Client for Birthday Party](#)
- Related: [Personal Injury Lawyer Suspended for Stabbing Man](#)
- Related: [Best Attorney Ads of All Time](#)
- Related: [Lawyers Resorting to Big TV Ads for Business](#)

Source: *Salem News*

What do you think of Corbett and Gelfgatt's actions? Let us know in the comments below.

