

## Federal Judge Condemns Northwestern Law Professor's Behavior as "Shameful"



Northwestern University Law Professor Bernard Black has been condemned by US Magistrate Judge N. Reid Neureiter for his "shameful" conduct in litigation. The matter relates to a probate case involving Black's sister, Joanne. A previous court found that Black had used his position as a conservator to steal \$1.5 million from his mentally ill sister. Black then filed further litigation with his wife, Katherine Litvak, a Northwestern Law Professor. However, their actions only served to complicate the payback process.

The issue was brought before Judge Neureiter as Black tried to remove a motion in the probate case to federal court. However, the Judge was not impressed with Black's attempts to interfere in the efforts of Joanne's guardian to recoup the money he stole from his sister. In his written response, Judge Neureiter wrote, "The fact that Mr. Black and his wife are lawyers and law professors makes the conduct in this affair that much more appalling."

Black is currently on the hook for repaying the \$1.5 million he stole from his sister and another \$3 million, as the damages were tripled. Judge Neureiter also said he "would not hesitate to refer him for discipline" if Black was admitted to practice law in Colorado. He has now recommended that the appropriate New York State Bar disciplinary authority investigate Mr. Black and consider imposing appropriate discipline, including potential suspension or disbarment.

However, Black has responded without contrition, lashing out at the system and accusing Judge Neureiter of making the "clearly wrong" removal decision. He has also accused the probate judge who found him liable for civil theft, Elizabeth D. Leith, of making up facts with no basis in the record. Meanwhile, Litvak attacked the credibility of the probate judge, accusing her of trying to save face by punishing Black in the underlying case.

Judge Neureiter clearly condemned Black's actions, writing that his conduct, as described in the underlying state probate case, is shameful. He also accused Black and Litvak of conspiring to fraudulently encumber the accounts which contained the stolen money, making it more difficult for the money to be released for Joanne's benefit.

The case has highlighted the importance of upholding professional standards and ethics in the legal profession. The conduct of Black and Litvak, both lawyers and law professors, has been called into question by Judge Neureiter. He has now referred the matter to the appropriate authorities, who will decide on the appropriate disciplinary action.

In response to the Judge's remarks, Black indicated that he plans to file objections to the magistrate's report. However, it remains to be seen what disciplinary action will be taken against him and what impact this case will have on his professional career.