

HAPPENING NOW

Client Protection Fund Reimburses \$9,050 to Victims of Recently Suspended Attorney

Fund reimburses 29 victims with nearly \$58,000

By Dan Trevas | March 10, 2015

Three former clients of a Canton attorney suspended from the practice of law by the Ohio Supreme Court in February have been awarded \$9,050 by Board of Commissioners of the Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection.

The board granted reimbursements to the clients of **Matthieu W. Oberholtzer** for his failure to provide the services requested. The Supreme Court suspended Oberholtzer's license on Feb. 12 for one year, but stayed the suspension and placed Oberholtzer on monitored probation and required he meet certain other conditions.

His sanction was based on two charges of professional misconduct while representing clients in a custody and child support matter and failure to cooperate with the investigation of his actions in the matters. At a disciplinary hearing, Oberholtzer explained serious personal and family medical issues affected his representation including having to undergo four spinal surgeries in the span of nine weeks, then suffering life-threatening staph and MRSA infections.

The fund's commissioners met Friday, and in addition to reimbursing Oberholtzer's clients, they awarded \$48,573 to 26 other clients of 11 former or suspended attorneys.

The Lawyers' Fund for Client Protection, formerly known as the Clients' Security Fund, was created in 1985 by the Supreme Court of Ohio to reimburse victims of attorney theft, embezzlement. Since its inception it has awarded more than \$19 million to victims. The fund does not contain any taxpayer dollars, as it derives its revenue by registration fees paid by every Ohio attorney. Ohio has more than 44,000 attorneys engaged in the active practice of law, and less than one percent of those attorneys have been involved in claims for the security funds.

Clients who believe they have sustained financial losses resulting from attorney theft, embezzlement or misappropriation should contact the fund at 614.387.9390 or toll free in Ohio at 1.800.231.1680.

To access more information about the disciplinary cases against some of these attorneys visit the Supreme Court's [online docket](#).

Here are the awards to the other victims determined by the board:

Cuyahoga County

Three former clients of former attorney **Kenneth J. Freeman** were reimbursed a total of \$3,611 as a result of Freeman's failure to provide the services requested. Freeman was permanently disbarred from the practice law in Ohio on March 6, 2013.

A former client of deceased attorney **Rexford W. Post** was reimbursed \$1,500 as a result of Post's failure to complete the services requested before his death on Sept. 7, 2013.

A former client of former attorney **William L. Tomson Jr.** was reimbursed \$5,200 as a result of Tomson's failure to provide the services requested. Tomson was permanently disbarred from the practice law in Ohio on June 4, 2013.

Eight former clients of former attorney **James W. Westfall Jr.** were reimbursed a total of \$9,701 as a result of Westfall's failure to provide the services requested. Westfall resigned from the practice of law in Ohio, with discipline pending, on Aug. 30, 2013.

A former client of suspended attorney **Jeffrey J. Wilcox** was reimbursed \$1,400 as a result of Wilcox's failure to provide the services requested. Wilcox's license to practice law in Ohio was suspended on Dec. 4, 2014.

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Erie County

Two former clients of deceased Erie county attorney John F. Kirwan were reimbursed a total of \$7,973 as a result of Kirwan's failure to complete the services requested before his death on Sept. 17, 2013.

Franklin County

A former client of suspended attorney **Sterling E. Gill II** was reimbursed \$4,700 as a result of Gill's failure to provide the services requested. Gill's license to practice law in Ohio was suspended on Oct. 24, 2013.

A former client of former attorney **Eric J. Strawser** was reimbursed \$3,740 as a result Strawser's failure to account for funds deposited with him. Strawser resigned from the practice of law in Ohio, with discipline pending, on Oct. 21, 2011.

Greene County

A former client of deceased Greene County attorney **Adrienne D. Brooks** was reimbursed \$600 as a result of Brooks' failure to provide the services requested before her death on March 12, 2013.

Hamilton County

A former client of former Hamilton County attorney **Harold K. Garrison** was reimbursed \$949 as a result of Garrison's failure to provide the services requested. Garrison resigned from the practice of law in Ohio, with discipline pending, on March 24, 2014.

Lawrence County

A former client of former Lawrence County attorney **Marty J. Stillpass** was reimbursed \$4,200 as a result of Stillpass' failure to provide the services requested. Stillpass resigned from the practice of law in Ohio, with discipline pending, on June 13, 2012.

Marion County

A former client of suspended attorney **Robert C. Cordrick** was reimbursed \$1,000 as a result of Cordrick's failure to provide the services requested. Cordrick's license to practice law in Ohio was suspended indefinitely on July 3, 2014.

Morrow County

A former client of former Morrow County attorney **William Mark Adams** was reimbursed \$1,800 as a result of Adams' failure to provide the services requested. Adams resigned from the practice of law in Ohio, with discipline pending, on April 18, 2014.

Summit County

The board determined that two former clients of disbarred attorney **Peter F. Fletcher** were eligible for reimbursement of a total of \$1,949 paid to Fletcher for services that he failed to provide. Fletcher was permanently disbarred from the practice of law in Ohio on April 18, 2013.

Trumbull County

A former client of deceased Trumbull County attorney **Anthony L. Antonucci** was reimbursed \$250 as a result of Antonucci's failure to provide the services requested before his death on Jan. 26, 2013.