

SUPREME COURT OF WISCONSIN  
OFFICE OF LAWYER REGULATION

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Public Reprimand With Consent

2023-OLR- 04

Maria Judith Getoff  
Attorney at Law

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On May 22, 2018, Maria Judith Getoff's law license was administratively suspended for failing to comply with mandatory reporting of continuing legal education requirements. Ms. Getoff was also administratively suspended on October 31, 2018 for non-payment of mandatory State Bar dues and failure to file a trust account certification.

During the period of Getoff's administrative suspension, she worked as an attorney with the National Indian Gaming Commission ("NIGC"). Her position with NIGC required her to have an active Wisconsin law license. Getoff did not become aware of her administrative suspension until July 14, 2022, when an NIGC Associate General Counsel sent her an email requesting the amount of Getoff's bar dues. At that time, Getoff realized that she could not recall when she last paid bar dues. Getoff immediately contacted the Wisconsin Board of Bar Examiners, who informed her that her law license had been administratively suspended since 2018. Consequently, from May 22, 2018 until approximately July 17, 2022, Getoff practiced law without a license.

On July 17, 2022, Getoff met with her supervisors to inform them of her administrative suspensions. Getoff was immediately removed from all legal matters and subsequently only performed non-legal work for NIGC until her law license could be reinstated. Getoff asserted that she did not discover her administrative suspension prior to July 14, 2022 because she mistakenly provided the State Bar of Wisconsin with an incorrect business mailing address after her employer

moved locations. In addition, in late summer 2016, Getoff was diagnosed with major depressive disorder, which negatively affected her memory and ability to concentrate. Getoff has since sought treatment, and has begun to experience better mental health. As part of her law license reinstatement process, Getoff produced a letter from her therapist, which expressed confidence in her recovery and ability to function both personally and professionally. Mitigating factors included Getoff's cooperation and transparency during the Office of Lawyer Regulation's investigation of both her administrative reinstatement petition and period of practice during administrative suspension, her notifying her employer immediately upon discovering her administrative suspension, the lack of any client harm, and her efforts to address her depressive disorder prior to petitioning for reinstatement.

By practicing law during a period of administrative suspension from May 22, 2018 until approximately July 17, 2022, Getoff violated the following Supreme Court Rules:

- SCR 10.03(6), which states, "If the annual dues or assessments of any member remain unpaid 120 days after the payment is due, the membership of the member may be suspended . . . and no person whose membership is so suspended for nonpayment of dues or assessments may practice law during the period of suspension."
- SCR 22.26(2), which states, "An attorney whose license to practice law is suspended or revoked or who is suspended from the practice of law may not engage in this state in the practice of law . . . ."
- SCR 31.10(1), which states, ". . . A lawyer shall not engage in the practice of law in Wisconsin while his or her state bar membership is suspended under this rule *[relating to compliance with CLE requirements]*."

SCR 10.03(6), SCR 22.26(2), and SCR 31.10(1) are enforceable via SCR 20:8.4(f), which states, "It is professional misconduct for a lawyer to violate a statute, supreme court rule, supreme court order or supreme court decision regulating the conduct of lawyers."

Attorney Getoff has no prior discipline.

In accordance with SCR 22.09(3), Attorney Maria Judith Getoff is hereby publicly reprimanded.

Dated this 16<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2023

SUPREME COURT OF WISCONSIN

Hon. Sue E. Busche

Referee