

The Supreme Court of the State of Louisiana

IN RE: KEELUS RENARDO MILES

No. 2024-B-00470

IN RE: Keelus Renardo Miles - Applicant Other; Disciplinary Counsel - Applicant
Other; Joint Petition for Consent Discipline;

May 29, 2024

Joint petition for consent discipline accepted. See per curiam.

PDG

JLW

JDH

WJC

JBM

Crichton, J., concurs in part and dissents in part and assigns reasons.
Genovese, J., dissents and assigns reasons.

Supreme Court of Louisiana

May 29, 2024



Chief Deputy Clerk of Court
For the Court

SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA

NO. 2024-B-0470

IN RE: KEELUS RENARDO MILES

ATTORNEY DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDING

PER CURIAM

Respondent failed to reduce a contingency fee agreement to writing, neglected a legal matter, failed to adequately communicate with a client, made false statements to a client and the Office of Disciplinary Counsel (“ODC”), and engaged in the unauthorized practice of law during a period of suspension. Respondent and the ODC have submitted a joint petition for consent discipline, seeking respondent’s disbarment. Having reviewed the petition,

IT IS ORDERED that the Petition for Consent Discipline be accepted and that Keelus Renardo Miles, Louisiana Bar Roll number 29723, be and he hereby is disbarred, retroactive to April 25, 2023, the date of the imposition of suspension in *In re: Miles*, 23-0028 (La. 4/25/23), 359 So. 3d 960. His name shall be stricken from the roll of attorneys and his license to practice law in the State of Louisiana shall be revoked.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that all costs and expenses in the matter are assessed against respondent in accordance with Supreme Court Rule XIX, § 10.1, with legal interest to commence thirty days from the date of finality of this court’s judgment until paid.

SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA

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Attorney Disciplinary Proceeding

CRICHTON, J., concurs in part and dissents in part and assigns reasons:

I agree that disbarment is a commensurate sanction for respondent's serious misconduct. However, I dissent from the majority's decision to retroactively disbar respondent, beginning from the date of his most recent suspension (April 25, 2023) because it provides leniency for respondent's subsequent violations, and, importantly, is inconsistent with our rules. I would therefore reject the petition for consent discipline.

Respondent's history of misconduct spans nearly a decade. In 2014, respondent committed violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct, the sanction of which was participation in a diversion program and attendance at Trust Accounting School. In 2019, a majority of this Court accepted a joint petition for consent discipline and publicly reprimanded respondent for neglecting a legal matter, failing to communicate with a client, and failing to timely refund an unearned fee. Along with Justice Genovese, I dissented from the Court's acceptance of that joint petition for consent discipline, finding that a "mere public reprimand is inadequate discipline" under such serious circumstances. *In re: Miles*, 19-1279 (La. 10/21/19), 280 So. 3d 1135 (Mem.) (Crichton, J., dissenting).

More recently, this Court suspended respondent from the practice of law for three years in April, 2023, for additional blatant violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct, including failure to maintain necessary client and financial records, misusing his client trust account, converting client funds, failing to timely

remit funds to his clients and their medical providers, and signing his clients' names to the backs of settlement checks and releases without their authority and the notarizing the signatures. *In re: Miles*, 23-0028 (La. 4/25/23), 359 So. 3d 960.

Now, for a fourth occasion, respondent returns to this Court with yet more violations, including the unauthorized practice of law during his period of suspension, and this Court has accepted a joint petition for consent discipline to disbar respondent retroactive to his date of suspension (April 25, 2023). While I agree disbarment is an appropriate sanction, in my view, making respondent's disbarment retroactive runs afoul of this Court's approach in *Louisiana State Bar Ass'n v. Chatelain*, 572 So. 2d 470 (La. 1991), which stated that when the underlying conduct occurs within the same period as the misconduct forming the basis of a previous disciplinary matter, the discipline imposed should be determined as if both proceedings were before the court simultaneously. In this instance, the underlying misconduct in this matter (occurring between 2022 and 2023) did not occur in the same time frame as the misconduct resulting in respondent's suspension (from 2014 to 2018) and thus, retroactive disbarment effectively reduces respondent's suspension and shortens the window within which respondent may apply for readmission. *See also*, La. Sup. Ct. Rule XIX, § 24(A) (allowing for retroactive suspension where a lawyer has been placed on interim suspension and is suspended for the same misconduct that was the ground for the interim suspension). Consequently, I find no legal basis to impose retroactive disbarment under these circumstances and in doing so, it deprecates the seriousness of his multiple and repeated violations and ignores respondent's fervent dishonor of the disciplinary system and the noble practice of law.

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Genovese, J., dissents and would conditionally reject the Joint Petition for Consent Discipline.