

The Manila METEOR

October 3, 2001

Vol. I No. 517

WHAT YOU SOW IS WHAT YOU GET

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Attorney L was the subject of an administrative complaint for Unethical Practices, Conflict of Interest and Disloyalty to Clients. After due investigation, the High Court found that respondent made a “clear breach of the canons of professional responsibility” and suspended respondent indefinitely. The year was 1991.

Respondent subsequently sent a letter stressing that he was not seeking reconsideration but that being already 62 years of age, he merely wanted to know how long he would stay suspended.

Three years later in 1994 he filed a petition to lift his suspension from the practice of law. The Supreme Court referred the petition to the IBP for evaluation, report and recommendation. Four years later in 1998, the IBP issued a report recommending the lifting of respondent's indefinite suspension.

In a letter dated Jan. 10, 2000 respondent already 71 years old wrote a letter to the Chief Justice insisting on his innocence and chiding the Court for slumbering on acting upon the IBP resolution to lift his indefinite suspension.

Unfortunately, the Supreme Court did not take his letter kindly:

The insolence of respondent's remonstrations that the Court has been sleeping on its job in acting upon his case not only underscores his callous disregard of the myriad administrative and judicial travails the Court has to contend with as the Tribunal of Last Resort, among them, the chronic problem of an overflowing docket of which his case is but one additional aggravation; it also betrays his absolute lack of appreciation and disrespect for the efforts and measures, undertaken by the Court to cope with these concerns. Needless to state, such presumptuousness is only too deserving of rebuke.

Respondent must know that the Court is neither bound by the findings of the IBP nor much less, obliged to accept the same as a matter of course because as the Tribunal which has the final say on the proper sanctions to be imposed on errant members of both bench and bar, the Court has the prerogative of making its own findings and rendering judgment on the basis thereof rather than

that of the IBP, OSG, or any lower court to whom an administrative complaint has been referred to for investigation and report.

The court after reminding respondent that the practice of law was a privilege, nevertheless fixed respondent's suspension at 10 years.

So of respondent could stay health for one more year, then he could revive his legal practice at age 72.

(Dumadag vs. Lumaya, 334 SCRA 513, June 29, 2000)