



news

Colorado Judicial Branch
Mary J. Mullarkey, Chief Justice
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Colorado Supreme Court Attorneys' Fund for Client Protection distributed nearly \$600,000 in 2009

DENVER – The Colorado Supreme Court Office of Attorney Regulation today announced that in calendar year 2009 it distributed payments totaling \$594,197 to 18 clients victimized by attorneys in Colorado. The attorneys involved were found to have breached legal or ethical obligations while practicing law and were either disciplined or disbarred by the Court for their actions.

“Attorney misconduct is not something the Court takes lightly,” said Attorney Regulation Counsel John Gleason. “The Attorneys’ Fund for Client Protection plays a significant role in working to make whole those clients who suffered damages in the course of being represented by dishonest attorneys.”

The Court’s Fund paid out a record \$1,400,000 in 2006. The 2009 payments represent the second largest annual payout since the Fund’s inception. The Court created the Fund in 1998 and since that time the total amount paid out exceeds \$3,800,000.

Gleason emphasized that the overwhelming majority of Colorado’s lawyers are honest, devoted practitioners who would never injure a client. But for the small number of dishonest lawyers the Fund goes a long way in renewing public confidence in the legal profession.

“Many of the stories are heart-rending,” Gleason stated. “Although the lawyer betrayed the client’s trust, when the injured client finds out that every active Colorado lawyer pays into

the Fund the clients are amazed. The goal of the Fund is to make every client who lost money because of a lawyer's misconduct whole by reimbursing 100% of the loss.”

The Supreme Court created the Fund to reimburse clients who lost money because of a dishonest lawyer's conduct. The purpose of the fund is to promote confidence in the administration of justice and the integrity of the legal profession. No tax or public dollars are used by the Fund. Rather, it is entirely funded through a fee of \$40 which every lawyer pays as part of his or her annual registration fee.

A Board of Trustees comprised of both lawyers and non-lawyers administers the Fund through the Court's Office of Attorney Regulation. Claims are paid to clients whose lawyers had taken fees with no intention of performing legal services and to clients whose lawyers misused money from settlements, estate accounts, or other sources.

More information on the Supreme Court Office of Attorney Regulation, including the Attorneys' Fund for Client Protection, can be found by visiting:

<http://www.coloradosupremecourt.com/Regulation/Regulation.asp>