
2014

The Maryland Court of Appeals has disbarred an attorney for criminal conduct committed while employed by the Court of Special Appeals.

This attorney discipline proceeding concerns a Maryland lawyer who solicited for sexual acts a person whom the lawyer believed to be under the age of consent.

Robert John Greenleaf ("Greenleaf"), Respondent, while serving as the Chief Deputy Clerk of the Court of Special Appeals of Maryland, used the Internet to solicit for sexual acts a law enforcement officer who was posing as a fourteen-year-old or fifteen-year-old girl...

...it was established that while the Chief Deputy Clerk of the Court of Special Appeals, Greenleaf used a State-owned computer in the Robert C. Murphy Courts of Appeal Building to communicate with "Beth."

Greenleaf believed that "Beth" was a fourteen-year-old or a fifteen-year-old girl. "Beth" repeatedly referred to her age and stated that she was a high school student. The hearing judge expressly rejected Greenleaf's allegation that he believed that "Beth" was an adult who was "role-playing" by posing as a fourteen-year-old or a fifteen-year-old girl.

On approximately one hundred fifty separate dates, Greenleaf and "Beth" e-mailed and/or chatted with each other. On nearly half of those dates, Greenleaf used his computer at the Robert C. Murphy Courts of Appeal Building to communicate with "Beth."

The court

Greenleaf violated MLRPC 8.4(c) by using one of the Maryland Judiciary's computers to solicit "Beth"; Greenleaf's misconduct is accompanied by eight aggravating factors, such as a pattern of misconduct, refusal to acknowledge the wrongful nature of his misconduct, and indifference to rehabilitation; there is a sole mitigating factor (*i.e.*, the absence of a prior disciplinary record); the hearing judge did not find that Greenleaf had been diagnosed with any mental disability; and the Commission forcefully recommends that we disbar Greenleaf, identifying him as "a sexual predator" in its written recommendation and at oral argument.

The attorney has been a prosecutor with several State's Attorney offices prior to his appointment as Chief Deputy Clerk. (Mike Frisch)

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