

Sumner attorney disbarred

Motion to reconsider filed September 9, 2009

BY KATRINA CORNWELL/The News Examiner

The Supreme Court's Board of Professional Responsibility recently disbarred a Sumner County attorney who authorities say had an illicit affair with a client and conspired with him and his mother to smuggle him drugs into the jail in Gallatin.

Jocelyn D. Mims, 49, pleaded guilty in November in Sumner County Criminal Court to one count of conspiracy and one count of criminal attempt to introduce drugs into a penal facility.

The board filed a petition for final discipline against Mims following her guilty plea. Her actions violate a rule of professional conduct, according to a press release from the Board of Professional Responsibility.

Mims' attorney, David Raybin, has filed a motion to reconsider based upon an appeal he filed of her original conviction.

"The disbarment is based on her conviction," Raybin said. "Her conviction isn't final yet."

Also, Raybin said his client was not notified of the Tennessee Supreme Court's filing for disbarment because she was in the penitentiary at the time.

"By the time it got to the penitentiary, she had already been paroled," Raybin said.

Mims was arrested Feb. 20, 2008. Sumner County Criminal Court Judge Dee Gay barred her from practicing law in Criminal, General Sessions or Juvenile courts in Sumner County while the case was being adjudicated. "He felt like she was a danger to the public; she had had access to prisoners," Sumner County District Attorney Ray Whitley said. "She had fallen in love with Richard Porter. They were having an illicit relationship. That's why she was smuggling the drugs to him."

The charges were brought against Mims following an investigation that began around Feb. 13, 2008, according to filed affidavits.

According to statements on the affidavit by Detective Tim Bailey, the investigation showed that Mims made arrangements with a Sumner County jail inmate scheduled for a furlough to go to a road pull-off on the State 109 bridge going into Wilson County and pick up a plastic cup and bring the contents to the jail.

Bailey then went to that location and found a cup with 58 Xanax tablets, eight Xanax bars, about a quarter of an ounce of marijuana along with some tobacco and rolling papers.

When he was charged in the conspiracy case, Richard Porter was still serving a sentence for a third-offense DUI and reckless aggravated assault from when he struck a young girl with his motorcycle, according to Lamberth, the prosecutor. "He was represented by Ms. Mims in that case," he said.

Mims' continued contact with her former client, even bringing his 8-year-old daughter to one of those visits, aroused suspicions, Sumner County District Attorney Ray Whitley said.

"She continued to have contact with him. We got information there was funny business going on between her and him. There were too many contact visits at the jail," he said.