

State of New York
Supreme Court, Appellate Division
Third Judicial Department

Decided and Entered: February 14, 2019

PM-14-19

In the Matter of ATTORNEYS
IN VIOLATION OF JUDICIARY
LAW § 468-a.

COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL
STANDARDS, Now Known as
ATTORNEY GRIEVANCE
COMMITTEE FOR THE THIRD
JUDICIAL DEPARTMENT,
Petitioner;

MEMORANDUM AND ORDER
ON MOTION

JOSEPH CHIDOZIE OBELE,
Respondent.

(Attorney Registration No. 4000915)

Calendar Date: November 19, 2018

Before: Garry, P.J., Lynch, Clark, Aarons and Rumsey, JJ.

Monica A. Duffy, Attorney Grievance Committee for the
Third Judicial Department, Albany, for petitioner.

Joseph Chidozie Obele, North Potomac, Maryland, respondent
pro se.

Per Curiam.

Respondent was admitted to practice by this Court in 2001
and presently lists a business address in Maryland with the
Office of Court Administration. He is also admitted to practice

in his native country of Nigeria. By September 2009 order, this Court suspended respondent from the practice of law in New York for conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice arising from his noncompliance with the attorney registration requirements of Judiciary Law § 468-a and Rules of the Chief Administrator of the Courts (22 NYCRR) § 118.1 (Matter of Attorneys in Violation of Judiciary Law § 468, 65 AD3d 1447, 1470 [2009]; see Rules of Professional Conduct [22 NYCRR 1200.0] rule 8.4 [d]). Respondent now seeks his reinstatement (see Rules for Attorney Disciplinary Matters [22 NYCRR] § 1240.16 [a]). The Lawyers Fund for Client Protection indicates that it has no objection to respondent's application, and petitioner advises that it defers to the Court's discretion with respect to respondent's application.

Given the length of his suspension, respondent properly submits a sworn affidavit in the form applicable to attorneys suspended for longer than six months (see Rules for Attorney Disciplinary Matters [22 NYCRR] § 1240.16 [b]; part 1240, appendix C; see e.g. Matter of Attorneys in Violation of Judiciary Law § 468-a [Freedman], 166 AD3d 1161, 1161 [2018]). Office of Court Administration records demonstrate that respondent has cured the delinquency that resulted in his suspension and that he is current with his biennial registration requirements (see Judiciary Law § 468-a; Rules of the Chief Admin of Cts [22 NYCRR] § 118.1). Respondent also provides proof that he successfully completed the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination, as is required for attorneys seeking reinstatement following suspensions of six months or more (see Rules for Attorney Disciplinary Matters [22 NYCRR] § 1240.16 [b]; compare Matter of Attorneys in Violation of Judiciary Law § 468-a [Castle], 161 AD3d 1443, 1444 [2018]). Moreover, having reviewed respondent's affidavit and supplemental correspondence with supporting documentation, as well as petitioner's correspondence in response, we are satisfied that he has complied with the order of suspension and the rules of this Court, that he has the requisite character and fitness for the practice of law and that it would be in the public's interest to reinstate him to the practice of law in New York (see Matter of Attorneys in Violation of Judiciary Law §468-a [Freedman], 166 AD3d at 1162; Matter of Attorneys in Violation of Judiciary Law

§ 468-a [Ettelson], 161 AD3d 1478, 1480 [2018]; Rules for Attorney Disciplinary Matters [22 NYCRR] § 1240.16 [a]). Accordingly, we grant respondent's motion.

Garry, P.J., Lynch, Clark, Aarons and Rumsey, JJ., concur.

ORDERED that respondent's motion for reinstatement is granted; and it is further

ORDERED that respondent is reinstated as an attorney and counselor-at-law in the State of New York, effective immediately.

ENTER:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert D. Mayberger". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Robert D. Mayberger
Clerk of the Court