

**NO. BD-2011-0031**

S.J.C. Order of Term Suspension entered by Justice Gants on March 28, 2011, with an effective date of April 27, 2011.¹

SUMMARY²

The respondent received a term suspension of six months for the conduct described below.

The respondent was employed as a senior staff attorney for the Massachusetts Appeals Court. His duties included writing memoranda and drafting and editing decisions for style and content.

In July 2009, the respondent ran three advertisements on Craigslist offering services to students in writing and editing papers and essays. One of the last listings read in part, "I'm offering the only service that guarantees you a quality grade for a paper that I write or edit for you". In placing the listings, the respondent knew it was likely that any papers written by him would be submitted by the purchaser for academic credit.

One of the listings ultimately led to an e-mail from a person who claimed to be a law school student looking for assistance on a paper on physician-assisted suicide ("buyer"). In response, the respondent offered assistance and guaranteed a "respectable" grade. The respondent further informed the buyer that he was an attorney and provided a copy of his resume, which indicated his employment at the Massachusetts Appeals Court. Unbeknownst to the respondent, the buyer was a free-lance reporter preparing an article on the business of selling term papers to students enrolled at colleges and other academic institutions.

The respondent did not ultimately write or edit any school essay for anyone for a fee or otherwise. In late August or early September 2009, the respondent removed his advertisements from Craigslist, after the buyer disclosed his true identity and purpose.

By letter dated December 29, 2009, the respondent was discharged from employment at the Massachusetts Appeals Court. The respondent acknowledged the wrongfulness of his conduct before the matter was brought to the attention of bar counsel. The respondent has

¹ The complete Order of the Court is available by contacting the Clerk of the Supreme Judicial Court for Suffolk County.

² Compiled by the Board of Bar Overseers based on the record file with the Supreme Judicial Court.

received substantial adverse publicity on the internet, in legal publications and in the legal community.

The respondent's conduct in offering his services to write or edit law student papers knowing it likely that the papers would be submitted for academic credit and in offering to work on a paper for a law student for a fee, without attribution, is conduct involving deception and dishonesty in violation of Mass. R. Prof. C. 8.4(c).

This matter came before the board on a stipulation of facts and disciplinary violations and a joint recommendation for a six-month suspension. The board accepted the parties' recommendation and recommended a six-month suspension to the Supreme Judicial Court. On March 28, 2011, the Court suspended the respondent for six months effective thirty days from the date of the order.