

In the Supreme Court of Georgia

Decided: March 22, 2022

S22Y0549. IN THE MATTER OF DONALD RICHARD
DONOVAN.

PER CURIAM.

Donald Richard Donovan (State Bar No. 225762), who was admitted to the State Bar in 1979, has submitted a petition for voluntary surrender of his law license. See Bar Rule 4-227 (b) (2). While serving as the District Attorney for Paulding County, Donovan was indicted on five felony counts, including allegations of bribery and false swearing. On January 6, 2022, Donovan pleaded guilty to a reduced charge of one misdemeanor count of unprofessional conduct pursuant to the First Offender Act. See OCGA § 42-8-60 (a). In connection with that plea, he admitted that he knowingly made false statements in an affidavit he prepared in response to a sexual harassment complaint filed against him.

Donovan was sentenced to 12 months on probation. One of the conditions of his sentence is that he surrender his law license. Accordingly, he has petitioned this Court for a voluntary surrender of his license.

Donovan admits that, by his actions, he is in violation of Rule 8.4 (a) (3) of the Georgia Rules of Professional Conduct (“GRPC”) found in Bar Rule 4-102 (d). The maximum penalty for this violation is disbarment. See GRPC 8.4 (d); see also GRPC 8.4 (b) (2) (imposition of first offender probation constitutes conviction). He also acknowledges that the surrender of his license is tantamount to disbarment. See GRPC Rule 1.0 (r).

The State Bar has filed a response, asking the Court to accept the petition because Donovan’s misconduct warrants disbarment. See, e.g., *In the Matter of Rogan*, 309 Ga. 583, 583 (847 SE2d 308) (2020) (accepting petition for voluntary surrender of license by lawyer who entered nolo contendere plea under First Offender Act to obstruction of officers). Having reviewed the petition and response, we agree to accept Donovan’s petition for voluntary

surrender of his license. Accordingly, it is hereby ordered that the name of Donald Richard Donovan be removed from the rolls of persons authorized to practice law in the State of Georgia. Donovan is reminded of his duties pursuant to Bar Rule 4-219 (b).

Voluntary surrender of license accepted. All the Justices concur.