

What's New in the 2026-2027 Edition

In the wake of the Court's landmark decision in *Matter of Wade*, 250 N.J. 581, 275 A.3d 426 (2022), the Justices promulgated Rule 1:20-21A which establish a procedure that disbarred attorneys can utilize to seek readmission to practice. A key component of the new Rule of Court was the establishment of an Attorney Regulatory Board, the function of which is to oversee and evaluate the readmissions application procedure. As detailed in section 4:18, *infra*, pursuant to Rule 1:20-15B, the Board is composed of six members, four of whom must be New Jersey licensed attorneys and two of whom are lay people. Following appointment by the Supreme Court, Board members serve three-year terms and are restricted from serving more than four full terms.

Effective April 1, 2026, the Court announced the initial slate of Board members. They included the following individuals:

Judge Julio L. Mendez (retired) (Board Chair)

Lynne F. Newsome, Esq. (Board Vice-Chair)

Natalya G. Johnson, Esq.

Brett R. Harris, Esq.

Perry Lighty

Mitchell I. Herman

With establishment of the Attorney Regulatory Board, disbarred attorneys may now make formal applications for readmission in conformity with Rule 1:20-21A. To date, the prospect for successful readmission applications among the disbarred cohort appears to be bleak. Interest in readmission appears to be weak. Apart from a lack of interest in returning to the practice of law, the demanding criteria for readmission pose largely insurmountable obstacles for many candidates. Worst of all, the ability of these former attorneys to pass the New Jersey Bar Examination has proven to be largely an insuperable task for the vast majority of the candidates, many of whom have been away

from the practice of law for years, if not decades.

Time will tell, but at this point, given the realities of the situation, it appears that the readmission to practice by disbarred attorneys will be granted sparingly and in the rarest of circumstances.

ROBERT RAMSEY ED.D.
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