



Attorney who divulged info about ex-client suspended

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 The Associated Press

OMAHA — The Nebraska Supreme Court on Friday indefinitely suspended an Omaha attorney for divulging incriminating information about a former client to a prosecutor after the client fired her from his criminal case.

Donna Tonderum lost her license to practice in Nebraska for a minimum of three years.

The Counsel for Discipline, which investigates complaints against lawyers, said Tonderum was representing a client charged with first-degree sexual assault last year when the client fired her.

About two weeks later, according to the complaint, Tonderum called the prosecutor in the case, saying she knew her former client was guilty of the charge. She said she wanted to see him go to prison and shared the names of several witnesses in the case, what their testimonies would be and what she expected

her former client's defense strategy to be.

The prosecutor reported the call to state authorities, as well as the new attorney for Tonderum's former client. A special prosecutor had to be appointed to handle the rape case.

The Counsel for Discipline said it mailed a grievance to Tonderum in September 2011, outlining the complaint against her. Court records say Tonderum replied by mail to the grievance, saying she had spoken to the prosecutor, but denying she had made the statements attributed to her.

She did not, however, respond to formal charges against her by the counsel in February. She also did not submit a brief to explain her actions, as the high court requested in May.

The high court said in its ruling Friday that if Tonderum applies to be reinstated after three years, she must demonstrate her fitness to practice law and "fully address the circumstances of the instant violation."