

Final

ETHICS ADVISORY PANEL  
OPINION # 95-39, - REQUEST # 617  
SEPTEMBER 14, 1995

The inquiring attorney obtained a judgment for a client. A year later, the defendant offered to satisfy the judgment. The inquiring attorney cannot locate the client at his/her address or by telephone and asks about his/her obligations regarding the satisfaction/settlement of the judgment, its collection and the disbursement of the client's funds.

The Panel has received numerous inquiries from attorneys concerning the appropriate ethical conduct for an attorney when unable to locate a client. In accordance with the Panel's General Information Opinion #6 (Issued June 30, 1993), the Panel opined that a lawyer must exercise diligent efforts to locate the missing client and to protect the client's interests within the purview of the retention agreement. See, Ethics Advisory Panel General Information Opinion # 6 for a complete discussion of an attorney's obligation when unable to locate a client.