

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND PRACTICES COMMISSION

In Re: Lances T. McKnight : PSPC Docket No. DI-92-5
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MEMORANDUM AND ORDER

On February 5, 1992, the Department of Education, through its Office of Chief Counsel, filed with the Professional Standards and Practices Commission a Notice of Charges, alleging that Respondent, Lances T. McKnight, had been charged in the Court of Common Pleas of Delaware County with the crimes of sexual abuse of children, corruption of minors, possession of obscene and other sexual materials, indecent exposure, aggravated indecent assault and involuntary deviate sexual intercourse. Attached to the Notice of Charges are certified copies of Delaware County Information Nos. C9829-91, C9830-91, C9832-91.

In the Notice of Charges, the Department avers that each of the crimes with which the respondent has been charged involve moral turpitude. Therefore, the Department submits that the professional teaching certificates issued to the respondent must be suspended under section 5(a)(11) of the Teacher Certification

Law, as amended, 24 P.S. §12-1255(a)(11). In addition, the Department avers that the respondent is a "danger to the health, safety and welfare of students in the schools of this Commonwealth" and, therefore, that suspension of the respondent's professional certificates should be made immediately.

On March 17, 1992, the Department filed with the Commission a Motion for Judgment on Default pursuant to 1 Pa. Code §35.37 and 22 Pa. Code §233.13(e)(1)(iii). In its motion, the Department avers that the respondent received a copy of the Notice of Charges, by certified mail, on February 8, 1992, in which he was expressly informed that he must respond to the Notice of Charges no later than 30 days after receipt of the Notice of Charges.

The record reflects that the respondent has not responded to the Notice of Charges within the time prescribed by section 13(a) of the Teacher Certification Law, as amended, 24 P.S. §12-1263(a). In addition, the respondent has not filed an answer to the Department's motion. Therefore, pursuant to 1 Pa. Code §35.37, the respondent is in default and is deemed to have admitted the averments contained in the Notice of Charges and in the Department's Motion for Judgment on Default.

Because the respondent has been charged, by criminal information, with crimes involving moral turpitude, the

Commission at a closed meeting held on April 9, 1992 in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, determined that all professional certificates issued to the respondent by the Department of Education must be suspended. In addition, because the respondent is deemed to have admitted that he "is a danger to the health, safety and welfare of students in the schools of this Commonwealth," the certificates must be suspended immediately without awaiting the usual 30-day appeal period.

Therefore, we direct that the following order be entered:

ORDER

AND NOW, this *2nd* day of May, 1992, upon consideration of the Department of Education's Motion for Judgment on Default, it is hereby ORDERED that the motion is GRANTED. Therefore, it is hereby ORDERED that the Department of Education shall suspend immediately all professional certificates issued by the Department to the Respondent, Lances T. McKnight. It is further ORDERED that the Department shall so notify immediately all chief state school officers of the United States and chief school administrators and teacher preparatory institutions of this Commonwealth in accordance with 22 Pa. Code §49.64(f).

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS AND
PRACTICES COMMISSION

By:

Howard R. Selekman
Howard R. Selekman
Chairperson

ATTEST:

Warren D. Evans
Warren D. Evans
Executive Director