

**OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES, OFFICE OF THE COURT
ADMINISTRATOR, COMPLAINANT, VS. LEDA O. URI, COURT
STENOGRAPHER I, MUNICIPAL TRIAL COURT, ALAMINOS, LAGUNA,
RESPONDENT.**

A.M. No. P-10-2852 (Formerly A.M. OCA IPI No. 09-3270-P). July 27, 2011

Ponente: BRION, J.

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BRION, J.:

On September 23, 2009, the Leave Division of the Office of the Court Administrator (OCA) reported on the tardiness incurred by Leda O. Uri, Court Stenographer I, Municipal Trial Court, Alaminos, Laguna. The report showed that Leda was tardy 13 times in July 2009 and 10 times in August 2009. [1] Attached to the report were copies of Leda's Daily Time Records for July and August 2009. [2]

Leda was asked to comment on the report of her tardiness in the OCA's 1[st] Indorsement dated October 23, 2009. [3] Leda submitted her comment where she did not deny her tardiness. She gave the following explanation:

In my defense, and honestly there is very little defensible ground for me to stand on here, notice that in some days where I was found tardy, a very little difference of something like one (1) or two (2) minutes made it so. This goes to show that in an ordinary given day, I would have timed in within the regulation time but some factors like uncontrollable traffic and others created hindrances. Still, in most instances, my duties as a mother to a two (2) years old daughter and as a wife, equally time-demanding as ever, not being satisfied with the care a house help could provide until personally seeing to it that my child and husband are well cared of every morning, paid the price of coming to office at a later time. This make me consider requesting for a flexi-time schedule, if you may allow.

Finally, while being tardy is not what I willfully wanted to become, it is a lesson to be learned and rightfully so, I vow to immediately correct the same. And if it is of any worth, this is the first time in almost fourteen (14) years of dedicated service to the judiciary that I committed the infraction and I am so sorry about it. [4]

On February 12, 2010, Leda submitted a supplemental letter written in Tagalog [5] where she admitted that she had been tardy and that she understood that there was a penalty for it. She explained that she and her family used to rent a house close to her office, but in September 2008, for financial reasons, they moved to Sto. Angel in San Pablo City to live with her father who was already old and living alone. Because of the distance from San Pablo City to Alaminos, it also took her a longer time to reach the office. Leda added that she is the sole financial support of her husband who recently lost his job, her child, her father, her parent-in-law and her orphaned niece. To augment her income, she decided to open a small sari-sari store in Bay, Laguna, financed by her aunt abroad. At the times that she slept in Bay with her husband and her child, she left for San Pablo at 4:30 a.m. to check on her father and her niece. Only after she had taken care of the needs of her father and her niece would she go to work even if she was late. She would rather be late than absent. Leda wrote that it would be difficult for her to stop working now since her child is only two years old. She asked that she be given another chance to improve herself and to prove that she could make the necessary changes. She said that she would accept any penalty but

asked for a lighter penalty, if possible.

In its Report dated June 8, 2010, [6] the OCA found that Leda's explanation does not merit consideration to justify her habitual tardiness, citing *Re: Imposition of Corresponding Penalties* [7] where we ruled that moral obligations, performance of household chores, traffic problems, health conditions, domestic and financial concerns are not sufficient reasons to excuse habitual tardiness. The OCA recommended that the case be redocketed as a regular administrative matter and that Leda be reprimanded for habitual tardiness with a warning that a repetition of the same or similar offense would warrant the imposition of a more severe penalty.

On November 23, 2010, Leda submitted a Manifestation [8] that reads:

This is in connection with A.M. No. P-10-2852 [Formerly A.M. OCA IPI No. 09-3270-P] for tardiness incurred on July and August, in 2009. I beg the good indulgence of this Honorable Court to reconsider if possible the above mentioned case, considering that I have already served a one (1) month suspension without pay, following the Decision in A.M. No. P-10-2845 [Formerly A.M. OCA IPI No. 10-3321-P], also for tardiness incurred on September and October, in 2009, which is much later than the present case. And that I am asking your Honor, to please give me another chance for I have learned my lesson from my suspension and I am so sorry for what happened.

Leda has acknowledged her infraction and has felt remorse for her tardiness in the months of July and August 2009. Considering that she has been in the service for fourteen (14) years [9] and had been suspended without pay for one month for her tardiness in September and October 2009, we find the penalty of severe reprimand to be proper for the prior tardiness she committed in the earlier months of July and August 2009.

WHEREFORE, premises considered, we find Leda O. Uri, Court Stenographer I, Municipal Trial Court, Alaminos, Laguna, GUILTY of habitual tardiness. She is hereby SEVERELY REPRIMANDED, with the WARNING that any future finding of habitual tardiness, within the next two (2) years from notice of this Resolution, shall merit a penalty graver than the one-month suspension previously imposed on her.

SO ORDERED.

Carpio, (Chairperson), Leonardo-De Castro,[*] Peralta,**] and Perez, JJ., concur.

[*] Designated as Acting Member of the Second Division per Special Order No. 1006 dated June 10, 2011.

[**] Designated as Additional Member in lieu of Associate Justice Maria Lourdes P. A. Sereno per Special Order No. 1040 dated July 6, 2011.

[1] Rollo, p. 2.

[2] Id. at 3-4.

[3] Id. at 5.

[4] Id. at 7.

[5] Id. at 11-12.

[6] Id. at 13-14.

[7] 456 Phil. 183 (2003).

[8] Rollo, p. 18.

[9] Id. at 7.

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