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State court disbars White Plains attorney

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A White Plains lawyer has been disbarred for misconduct after the Appellate Division of the state Supreme Court said in a decision published Friday that he defied several judicial orders and engaged in "frivolous, vexatious litigation."

George Sassower "displayed utter contempt for the law and for those judicial officers sworn to uphold it," the court decision said.

On at least two occasions before his disbarment, Sassower, who had been practicing law since 1949, was sentenced to brief jail terms for contempt of

court.

Two years ago, when Sassower was representing a plaintiff in a business dispute, he riled a U.S. District Court judge by filing an almost identical lawsuit in the case a month after losing an initial action.

"Their only apparent aim," declared Judge Eugene H. Nickerson of Sassower and his client, "was to harass the defendants in some desperate hope that they will eventually tire of defending lawsuits and surrender. . . . This is nothing more than blackmail by litigation, and the court will not tolerate it."

In May 1985, Sassower defied an order from Nickerson to come to court for a deposition. Nickerson held Sassower in contempt, a conviction upheld

by an appeals court.

Sassower was also found guilty of contempt by two other judges and served jail terms of 30 and 10 days for those convictions.

He was also found guilty of continuing to represent clients after being found disqualified to do so, and, in one case, of ignoring a client's wishes that he no longer pursue litigation. In that case, the court said, Sassower filed numerous actions, leading his client to be assessed legal fees, fines and penalties.

Sassower also was found guilty of refusing to cooperate with an investigation into his conduct by the lawyers' committee that later filed the charges leading to his disbarment.