

Lawyer who missed hearing faces possible sanctions

By Deborah Plnes

Staff Writer

A state Supreme Court justice has ordered a White Plains divorce attorney to appear in court tomorrow for possible sanctions following what the judge termed a "gross insult" against the court.

Justice Samuel G. Fredman ordered Doris Sassower to appear at the hearing because she failed to show up July 10 for a hearing on a dispute over a former client's file.

In an angry decision made public this week, Fredman wrote he did not consider acceptable a July 6 letter from Sassower saying that she couldn't show July 10 because she would be "unavailable" the next two weeks.

Fredman maintained that he wrote Sassower immediately saying "she could not just tell me that she was 'unavailable' and expect me, or any other judge, to run a calendar in such fashion."

He said he must "either accept the gross insult visited upon me" or take other legal action.

Sassower, 56, a former president of the New York Women's Bar Association, said yesterday she was "flabbergasted" by Fredman's ruling. "I would never deliberately show disrespect to a court."

Sassower said she never received Fredman's response telling her she couldn't postpone the July 10 hearing before she left July 9 for a two-week vacation.

The July 10 hearing was scheduled after an application by White Plains attorney Harvey Landau to hold Sassower in contempt

for refusing to give him the file of her former client, Evelyn Breslaw of New Rochelle. Breslaw has been sued for divorce by her husband, Milton Breslaw, of New Jersey. The couple is separated.

Since Landau began representing Mrs. Breslaw in January 1988, he has sought the file. Sassower has resisted saying she first wants Mrs. Breslaw to pay \$3,650 in fees owed experts Sassower hired for the case.

Sassower attracted attention in 1986 when she was arrested, handcuffed and jailed after a White Plains restaurant owner said she and two friends refused to pay a disputed \$56.50 tab.

In April, she filed a multimillion dollar lawsuit against the restaurant owner, the White Plains Police Department, and Westchester County after a lower court conviction on charges of theft of services and resisting arrest was overturned on appeal.