

Court of Appeals of the State of Georgia

ATLANTA, August 14, 2026

The Court of Appeals hereby passes the following order:

A27A0165. IN RE: ESTATE OF BRETT RAYMOND HUGHES, DECEASED.

In this estate administration proceeding, the Probate Court of Clayton County issued an order on March 12, 2026, awarding attorney fees to the attorney for Janice Cooper King, the former administrator of the decedent's estate. Edna Fordham, the decedent's sister and an alleged creditor of the estate, filed a motion challenging the fees award and seeking other relief. On March 26, 2026, the probate court issued an order dismissing the motion. Fordham then filed this direct appeal, seeking to challenge the March 12, 2026 and March 26, 2026 orders. We lack jurisdiction, because a petition for discharge filed by King as the former administrator of the estate remains pending in the probate court.

As a threshold matter, we note that an order of the Probate Court of Clayton County generally may be appealed directly to the Court of Appeals. See OCGA §§ 15-9-123(a); 15-9-120(2). However, the order must be final. *In re Bruni*, 369 Ga. App. 488, 490(3) (893 SE2d 862) (2023). See OCGA §§ 5-6-34(a)(1)(B) (appeals generally may be taken from “[a]ll final judgments, that is to say, where the case is no longer pending in the court below”); 15-9-123(b) (explaining that the “general laws and rules of appellate practice and procedure ... shall ... govern appeals of civil cases from the probate courts”). Here, because the petition for discharge remains pending, Fordham was required to use the interlocutory appeal procedures — including obtaining a certificate of immediate review from the probate court — to obtain review of the March 12, 2026 and March 26, 2026 orders. See OCGA § 5-6-34(b); *Bandy v. Elmo*, 280 Ga. 221, 222 (626 SE2d 505) (2006); *In re Estate of Sims*, 246 Ga. App. 451,

452–53 (540 SE2d 650) (2000). Fordham’s failure to comply with the interlocutory appeal procedures deprives us of jurisdiction over this premature direct appeal, which is hereby DISMISSED.



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Clerk's Office, Atlanta, 08/14/2026

I certify that the above is a true extract from the minutes of the Court of Appeals of Georgia.

Witness my signature and the seal of said court hereto affixed the day and year last above written.

Christina Bailey Smith

, Clerk.