

Circuit Court for Prince George's County
Case No.: C-16-FM-23-007727

UNREPORTED*

IN THE APPELLATE COURT
OF MARYLAND

No. 134

September Term, 2025

SHOWNA SHARPE

v.

ACHILLES CREIGHTON

Reed,
Shaw,
Harrell, Glenn T., Jr.
(Senior Judge, Specially Assigned),

JJ.

PER CURIAM

Filed: December 3, 2025

*This is a per curiam opinion. Under Rule 1-104, the opinion is not precedent within the rule of stare decisis, nor may it be cited as persuasive authority.

Appellant Showna Sharpe appeals from an order by the Circuit Court for Prince George’s County that, among other things, dismissed her exceptions to the magistrate’s recommendations and granted appellee Achilles Creighton a judgment of absolute divorce. Sharpe failed to appear at the hearing on her exceptions. On appeal, she contends that the circuit court erred in holding the hearing without her and subsequently dismissing her exceptions. For the reasons below, we shall affirm.

In October 2023, Creighton sought an absolute divorce from Sharpe. The parties appeared at a hearing before a magistrate on July 9, 2024, at which the magistrate made various findings and recommendations. Sharpe timely excepted to the magistrate’s recommendations. She also requested that the court accept an electronic recording of the proceedings as the transcript, *see* Md. Rule 9-208(g)(4), which the court eventually granted on September 16.

In the interim, on August 15, the circuit court notified the parties of a hearing on Sharpe’s exceptions set for October 10. Two weeks before the hearing, Creighton moved to dismiss Sharpe’s exceptions for failure to serve a copy of the transcript. Sharpe opposed, stating that she had ordered, but not yet received, the electronic recording and would serve a copy on Creighton upon receipt.

Then, three days before the hearing, Sharpe requested a postponement because she still had not received the electronic recording. The court denied the motion the next day but did so “without prejudice to reconsideration upon verification of [the] date [the electronic recording] was requested.” Later that same day, Sharpe filed a “follow-up motion,” renewing her postponement request, and attached a receipt showing that she had

ordered the electronic recording about 30 minutes after Creighton moved to dismiss her exceptions. The court did not rule on the “follow-up motion” before the hearing.

Despite not being granted a postponement, neither Sharpe nor her attorney appeared at the October 10 hearing. Ultimately, the circuit court dismissed her exceptions for three reasons. *First*, for Sharpe’s failure to serve upon Creighton a copy of the electronic recording. *Second*, for her unexcused failure to appear at the exceptions hearing. And *third*, “for meritorious reasons”—the court explained that it had listened to the electronic recording and independently determined that Sharpe’s exceptions lacked merit. After the hearing, the circuit court entered orders denying Sharpe’s postponement request and dismissing her exceptions. Sharpe moved for reconsideration, which was denied. The court eventually adopted the magistrate’s recommendations and entered a judgment of absolute divorce. This appeal followed.

On appeal, as best we can tell, Sharpe contends that the circuit court erred in dismissing her exceptions because she was not present at the hearing and was never provided a copy of the electronic recording to serve upon Creighton. On this first point we note that, despite the claims in her brief, Sharpe was never granted a postponement. Indeed, the record reflects that her attorney knew before the hearing that the postponement request was denied and still chose not to attend. To the extent that Sharpe contends that the circuit court abused its discretion in not postponing the hearing, we are not persuaded. *See Serio v. Baystate Props., LLC*, 209 Md. App. 545, 554 (2013) (noting that whether to grant a postponement “is in the sound discretion of the trial court” (cleaned up)). The record reflects Sharpe failed to order the electronic recording until after Creighton moved to

dismiss her exceptions—more than two months after the hearing before the magistrate. Under these circumstances, we cannot say that the court’s decision was so far “beyond the fringe” of what we deem minimally acceptable as to be an abuse of discretion. *In re Andre J.*, 223 Md. App. 305, 323 (2015) (cleaned up).

As for Sharpe’s second point, we note that, although the circuit court signed Creighton’s proposed order indicating that the exceptions were dismissed for failure to serve a copy of the electronic recording, the transcript makes clear that the court exercised its independent judgment in denying the exceptions. A trial court is not required to provide “a litany of its reasons for accepting and adopting the fact finding, conclusions, and recommendations of a master.” *Kierein v. Kierein*, 115 Md. App. 448, 455–56 (1997). “Moreover, trial judges are presumed to know the law and to apply it properly.” *Marquis v. Marquis*, 175 Md. App. 734, 755 (2007) (cleaned up). They are not obligated to “set out in intimate detail each and every step of [their] thought process.” *Id.* (cleaned up). Sharpe does not present any substantive argument that the court erred in adopting the magistrate’s recommendations. Accordingly, we shall affirm the judgment.

JUDGMENT OF THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR PRINCE GEORGE’S COUNTY AFFIRMED. COSTS TO BE PAID BY APPELLANT.