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NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

BEFORE THE  
GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR  
98G0206 & 99G1249

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IN THE MATTER OF	)	
	)	
SHARON D. JUMPER,	)	REPRIMAND
ATTORNEY AT LAW	)	
	)	

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On April 25, 2001, the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar met and considered the grievance filed against you by Jason R. Parker and the North Carolina State Bar.

Pursuant to section .0113(a) of the Discipline and Disability Rules of the North Carolina State Bar, the Grievance Committee conducted a preliminary hearing. After considering the information available to it, including your response to the letter of notice, the Grievance Committee found probable cause. Probable cause is defined in the rules as "reasonable cause to believe that a member of the North Carolina State Bar is guilty of misconduct justifying disciplinary action."

The rules provide that after a finding of probable cause, the Grievance Committee may determine that the filing of a complaint and a hearing before the Disciplinary Hearing Commission are not required, and the Grievance Committee may issue various levels of discipline depending upon the misconduct, the actual or potential injury caused, and any aggravating or mitigating factors. The Grievance Committee may issue an admonition, a reprimand, or a censure to the respondent attorney.

A reprimand is a written form of discipline more serious than an admonition issued in cases in which an attorney has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct and has caused harm or potential harm to a client, the administration of justice, the profession, or a member of the public, but the misconduct does not require a censure.

The Grievance Committee was of the opinion that a censure is not required in this case and issues this reprimand to you. As chairman of the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar, it is now my duty to issue this reprimand, and I am certain that you will understand fully the spirit in which this duty is performed.

In January 1997, the state indicted Christy Holland for the murder of her former boyfriend, Stacy Speagle, which occurred on Jan. 27, 1996. Following a six-week trial which ended in the summer of 1998, Holland was acquitted. In January 1998, you filed a civil wrongful death action on behalf of Speagle's parents against Holland and others. Shortly after you filed the complaint, you made comments to the media, which were widely publicized, alleging that Jason Parker, the lead prosecutor in the Holland murder case, had violated discovery

rules and as a result, key information had been excluded from the criminal trial. These statements were not true. No evidence was excluded from the trial based on Parker's failure to comply with discovery. Your conduct in making statements to the media which you knew or should have known were false threw a shadow on the fairness and completeness of the criminal trial and the justice system in general, in violation of Rule 8.4(d) of the Revised Rules of Professional Conduct.

After you made these remarks, a grievance was filed against you with the N.C. State Bar concerning your remarks to the media. On March 11, 1998, you were served with the letter of notice which required you to respond to the grievance. You received an extension of time through April 24, 1998 in which to respond to the letter of notice, but did not actually respond to the letter of notice until May 21, 1998. Your failure to respond to the letter of notice in a timely fashion violated Rule 8.1 of the Revised Rules of Professional Conduct.

In a related matter, you sought admission pro hac vice to the United States District Court for the Northern District of Texas, Dallas Division, on Sept. 15, 1999. In your application for pro hac vice admission, you indicated that you had never been the subject of any "grievance proceedings" while a member of any state bar. In fact, you had been the subject of five grievances filed with the North Carolina State Bar as of Sept. 15, 1999. You had been sent letters of notice in each of these matters, and had been given two letters of warning for minor technical violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct. Consequently, your response to the federal court was misleading and therefore violated Revised Rule 8.4 (c) of the Revised Rules of Professional Conduct.

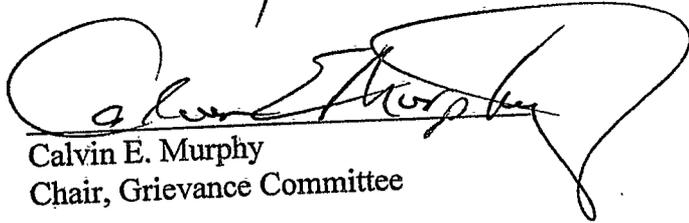
On Dec. 18, 2000, the North Carolina State Bar served you with a letter of notice concerning your responses in the pro hac vice admission form filed in federal court in Texas. Your response was therefore due no later than Jan. 3, 2001. When you did not respond, you were sent a follow up notice, asking you to respond by Jan. 16, 2001. On Feb. 6, 2001, you requested and received an extension until Feb. 21, 2001 in which to respond to the letter of notice. Your failure to respond promptly to the original letter of notice in this matter constituted a violation of Rule 8.1 of the Revised Rules of Professional Conduct.

Your misconduct in these matters is aggravated by the fact that you received a reprimand in January 2000 for failing to respond to letters of notice from the State Bar in four previous grievance matters.

You are hereby reprimanded by the North Carolina State Bar due to your professional misconduct. The Grievance Committee trusts that you will heed this reprimand, that it will be remembered by you, that it will be beneficial to you, and that you will never again allow yourself to depart from adherence to the high ethical standards of the legal profession.

In accordance with the policy adopted October 15, 1981 by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar regarding the taxing of the administrative and investigative costs to any attorney issued a reprimand by the Grievance Committee, the costs of this action in the amount of \$50.00 are hereby taxed to you.

Done and ordered, this 26 day of May, 2001.



Calvin E. Murphy  
Chair, Grievance Committee