

NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

BEFORE THE  
GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR  
19G0127

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IN THE MATTER OF )  
 )  
JASON L. KEITH, ) REPRIMAND  
ATTORNEY AT LAW )

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On July 18, 2019 the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar met and considered the grievance filed against you by the North Carolina State Bar. The grievance was assigned to a Subcommittee, which thoroughly reviewed the results of the State Bar staff's investigation of this matter.

Pursuant to Section .0113(a) of the Discipline and Disability Rules of the North Carolina State Bar, the Grievance Subcommittee conducted a preliminary hearing. After considering the information available to it, including your response to the letter of notice, the Grievance Subcommittee 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.

On February 1, 2019, United States District Court Judge Catherine Eagles issued a 17-page show cause order to you. The show cause order indicated that you represented four defendants in their individual criminal matters in the Middle District of North Carolina, wherein, among other things, you showed a lack of diligence in the representations, you demonstrated a lack of familiarity with the law, you provided inappropriate advice to the client(s) such that the client(s) risked receiving increased jail time and you did not keep your client(s) reasonably informed about their cases.

You appeared before Judge Eagles on March 14, 2019 and you were given an opportunity to contest the matters in the show cause order and be heard by the court. According to Judge Eagles, you "offered no evidence in opposition to the factual matters in the show cause order." In Judge Eagles' March 18, 2019 Order of Discipline, she found that you violated Rules 1.1 and 1.3 of the North Carolina Rules of Professional Conduct while representing the four clients. Generally, Judge Eagles required you to participate in live continuing legal education focused on federal criminal law and sentencing, and she required you to associate experienced counsel to work with you on cases in the Middle District.

The Grievance Committee issues this reprimand as you violated Rule 1.1 and Rule 1.3, as found by Judge Eagles.

You are hereby reprimanded by the North Carolina State Bar for 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 July 23, 2010 by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar regarding the taxing of administrative fees and investigative costs to any attorney issued a reprimand by the Grievance Committee, an administrative fee in the amount of \$350.00 is hereby taxed to you.

Done and ordered, this the 7<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2019.

A. Todd Brown Sr

A. Todd Brown, Sr., Chair  
Grievance Committee

ATB/lb