

NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

BEFORE  
THE GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE  
OF  
THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR  
23G1378

IN THE MATTER OF

MARIA MISSE,

ATTORNEY AT LAW

REPRIMAND

Pursuant to the procedures set forth in 27 N.C. Admin. Code, Chapter 1B, the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar considered the grievance filed against you by the North Carolina State Bar.

After thoroughly considering the information available to it, including your response to the letter of notice, the Grievance Committee found probable cause, defined as “reasonable cause to believe that a member of the North Carolina State Bar is guilty of misconduct justifying disciplinary action.”

Having found probable cause exists in your matter, the Grievance Committee next considered what level of discipline is most appropriate in your matter based upon all the facts, the nature of the misconduct, the actual or potential injury caused, and any aggravating or mitigating factors. After further discussion and deliberation, the Grievance Committee determined the conduct before it merited discipline at the level of reprimand.

A reprimand is a written form of discipline issued where an attorney is determined to have 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 protection of the public does not require a censure.

As Chair of the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar, it is my duty to issue this reprimand, which is based on the following conduct:

In your role as an attorney employed by a Michigan law firm, you only nominally participated in the representation of your clients while Michigan actors performed the majority of the work on your clients’ cases. You routinely utilized appearance attorneys to fulfill your responsibilities in court. In the case of your client R.N., the appearance attorney assigned by your firm did not appear for court and you also failed to appear, leaving the client without counsel. You later paid off the remainder of R.N.’s debt related to her pending litigation. By nominally participating in the representation of North Carolina clients by a Michigan law firm, you assisted in the unauthorized practice of law in violation of Rule 5.5(f). Your arrangement with the out-of-state firm (which selected and assigned your clients and paid you a salary) constituted fee-sharing with a non-lawyer in violation of Rule 5.4(a), allowed the entity that paid you to render legal services for others to direct or regulate your professional judgment in violation of Rule 5.4(c), and resulted in you failing to act with diligence on behalf of a client in violation of Rule 1.3. You also violated Rule 1.8(e) by providing financial assistance to a client in connection with pending litigation.

It is acknowledged (in mitigation) that, once your violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct were brought to your attention, you implemented and then followed standards of practice which address the prior deficiencies.

Accordingly, you are hereby reprimanded by the North Carolina State Bar for your professional misconduct consisting of the cited violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct. 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.

If you accept this reprimand, it will be maintained as a record in the judgment book of the North Carolina State Bar and a copy will be sent to the complainant. Please review carefully the details set forth in the formal Notice of Reprimand attached.

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 4<sup>th</sup> day of August, 2025.

  
Charles Gordon Brown, Chair  
Grievance Committee

CGB/jms