

NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

BEFORE THE  
GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR  
15G0544

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IN THE MATTER OF )  
 )  
GREGORY A. BULLARD, ) CENSURE  
ATTORNEY AT LAW )

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On January 21, 2016, the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar met and considered the grievance filed against you by J. O. 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.

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

The Grievance Committee believes that a hearing before the Disciplinary Hearing Commission is not required in this case and issues this censure to you. As chairman of the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar, it is now my duty to issue this censure.

In November 2012, Mr. J. O. retained you to handle the adoption of his son. Mr. O. called your office monthly to learn the status of the adoption. He was only able to speak periodically with your assistant, Ms. D. L. Ms. L. told Mr. O. that you were in court or unavailable to speak with him about the adoption. You did not return Mr. O.'s call.

In May 2015, Mr. O. was asked by someone in your office to bring his son's birth certificate to you and to sign paperwork. You were not present when Mr. O. signed the papers and he is unsure of what he signed. Ms. L. told Mr. O. that the documents would be filed in court. As of June 1, 2015, the date that Complainant filed this grievance, you had not filed adoption papers for him.

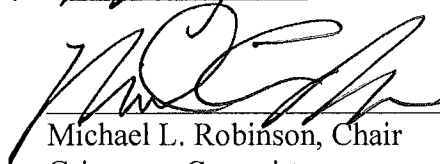
In your response to this grievance, you stated that you first learned of your office's failure to complete Mr. O.'s adoption case when you received notice of his grievance. As a result of this grievance, you said you discovered that Mr. O. hired you to handle the adoption and that Ms. L. completed the initial paperwork. However, Ms. L. never told you that you were retained by Mr. O. When you responded to this grievance, you said that you were unable to find the adoption paperwork or a file for Mr. O. However, before you came to the State Bar office on December 1, 2015 pursuant to a subpoena, you did find the adoption papers that Ms. L. prepared.

The Grievance Committee found that you neglected Mr. O.'s case in violation of Rule 1.3 and Rule 8.4(d). The Grievance Committee also found that you failed to communicate with Mr. O. about his matter in violation of Rule 1.4(a)(3)(4)(b). Finally, the Grievance Committee found that you failed to properly supervise Ms. L. in violation of Rule 5.3(b). The Grievance Committee considers it inexcusable that you would have a case in your office for three years and not know that the client had hired you. You are advised to pay closer attention to the business of your law practice.

You are hereby censured by the North Carolina State Bar for your violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct. The Grievance Committee trusts that you will ponder this censure, recognize the error that you have made, and that you will never again allow yourself to depart from adherence to the high ethical standards of the legal profession. This censure should serve as a strong reminder and inducement for you to weigh carefully in the future your responsibility to the public, your clients, your fellow attorneys and the courts, to the end that you demean yourself as a respected member of the legal profession whose conduct may be relied upon without question.

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 censure by the Grievance Committee, an administrative fee in the amount of \$350.00 is hereby taxed to you.

Done and ordered, this 9<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2016.



Michael L. Robinson, Chair  
Grievance Committee  
The North Carolina State Bar

MLR/lb