

NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

BEFORE THE
GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR
10G1244

IN THE MATTER OF)

Ronald L. Pressley,)
Attorney At Law)

REPRIMAND)

On October 20, 2011, the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar met and considered the grievance filed against you by J.L.

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.

In 2008, J.L. retained you to handle a personal injury matter. In September 2008, you filed a civil complaint and summons on J.L.’s behalf. In December 2009, defendant filed a Motion to Dismiss. Although you were served with the motion, you did not respond. You neglected J.L.’s matter in violation of Rule 1.3. In May 2010, the court dismissed with prejudice J.L.’s matter. You were served with a copy of the court’s order. Your failure to act caused J.L.’s

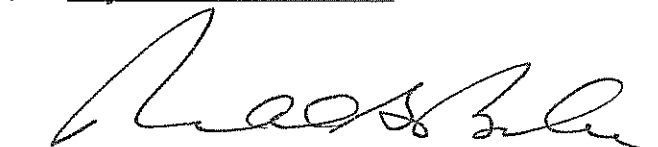
case to be dismissed with prejudice and is conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice in violation of Rule 8.4(d). You failed to inform J.L. that the Motion to Dismiss was filed and that her matter was dismissed. Your failure to communicate with J.L. is a violation of Rule 1.4(a) and (b). In November 2010, J.L. was able to communicate with by phone for the first time. You told J.L. that her case was calendared for the fall, but that you did not know if the case would be heard at that time. Because you were aware that J.L.'s matter was previously dismissed with prejudice and therefore would not appear on any court calendar for hearing, you knowingly made a false statement to J.L. in violation of Rule 8.4(c).

In May 2010, the Disciplinary Hearing Commission entered an order suspending your license to practice law for *inter alia*, neglect and failure to communicate. The suspension was stayed on condition that you meet several conditions. Because you failed to comply with the conditions of the stayed suspension, the Disciplinary Hearing Commission activated the three year suspension in November 2010. But for the fact that your conduct in J.L.'s matter is substantially similar to the conduct outlined in the suspension order, your conduct would warrant stronger discipline.

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 22 day of Nov, 2011.



Ronald G. Baker, Sr., Chair
Grievance Committee

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