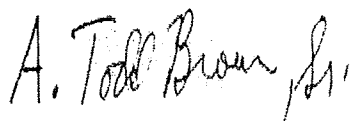


in possession of cash belonging to M. Watkins rather than those funds of M. Watkins' being properly maintained in a fiduciary account, in violation of Rule 1.15-2(a). You failed to timely file annual accounts with the Clerk in violation of Rule 1.15-3(f) and 8.4(d). You also established and allowed arrangements under which fiduciary funds were not properly maintained and disbursed, as described above, and under which fiduciary funds were disbursed in a manner that could not accurately be accounted for, in violation of Rule 1.15-2(a) and 8.4(d). In determining that a censure was appropriate rather than taking other action, the Grievance Committee found the following to be pertinent: (1) you have no prior discipline; (2) you displayed a cooperative attitude with the disciplinary process; (3) you reviewed records for the this fiduciary account during its existence, requiring receipts and reports from the guardian of the person and reviewing records online; (4) when notified by the Clerk's Office that debit cards were not approved for guardianship accounts, you had the guardian of the person cease using the debit card for this fiduciary account; (5) in 2015, you hired an accountant at your expense who traced all cash withdrawals from this fiduciary account and cash expenditures for which the guardian of the person had receipts over the eight-year guardianship period, providing the only option for accounting available in light of the fungible nature of cash and the lack of direct correlation on most occasions between the cash withdrawn from this fiduciary account and the cash expenditures for the ward, and you provided this with proposed annual accounts to the Clerk's Office in an effort to rectify the consequences of your conduct; and (6) you have stopped serving as guardian of estates.

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 19th day of March 2019.



A. Todd Brown, Sr., Chair
Grievance Committee
The North Carolina State Bar

ATB/lb