

NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

BEFORE THE  
GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR  
17G1205 and 17G1218

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IN THE MATTER OF )  
 )  
JOHN O. LAFFERTY, JR., ) REPRIMAND  
ATTORNEY AT LAW )

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On April 19, 2018, the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar met and considered the grievances filed against you by N. G. G. (in 17G1205) and M. B. M. (in 17G1218). The grievances were 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 responses to the letters 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.

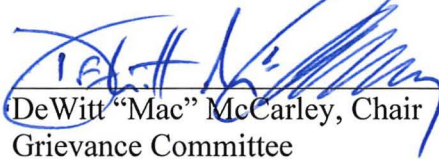
The Grievance Committee was of the opinion that a censure is not required in this case and issues this reprimand to you. As chairman of the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar, it is now my duty to issue this reprimand.

In both of the above-referenced grievances, you knowingly failed to timely respond to the State Bar's Letters of Notice in violation of Rule 8.1(b) and N.C. Gen. Stat. §84-28(b)(3). Also, in 17G1218, after being retained by Marion Malone in April 2017 to, among other things, file the preliminary 90-day inventory in *In re Estate of Melissa Packard Malone*, No. 17-E-189 (Clerk of Lincoln Co. Sup. Ct.), you failed to prepare and file the estate's 90-day preliminary inventory in violation of Rule 1.3, and failed to reasonably communicate with Mr. Malone about the filing of the estate's 90-day preliminary inventory and amended Inventory in violation of Rule 1.4(a)(3).

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 14<sup>th</sup> day of May, 2018.

  
DeWitt "Mac" McCarley, Chair  
Grievance Committee

DM/lb