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NOTICE OF SUSPENSION

Case No. 17-136-GA

Notice Issued: October 19, 2021

Christopher S. Easthope, P 53097, Saline, Michigan, by the Attorney Discipline Board affirming, in part, modifying, in part, and reversing, in part, Washtenaw County Hearing Panel #5's findings of misconduct and reducing discipline from a one-year suspension to a 180-day suspension

Suspension - 180 Days, Effective October 16, 2021

After proceedings held pursuant to MCR 9.115, the hearing panel found that while respondent was a judge at the 15th District Court, he engaged in numerous ex parte communications with his friend, an attorney that routinely appeared in front of him, and failed to disclose his personal friendship or disqualify himself from matters in which his friend was involved. The hearing panel found multiple violations of Canons 2A and B; and Canon 3A(4)(a) of the Code of Judicial Conduct; MRPC 3.5(b); 8.4(a)-(c); and, MCR 9.104(1)-(4) and ordered that respondent's license to practice law in Michigan be suspended for one year, effective November 22, 2019. Respondent filed a timely petition for review and for a stay of the order of suspension. On November 21, 2019, the Board stayed the order of discipline on an interim basis, pending further consideration. On December 18, 2019, an order was entered granting respondent's request for a stay of the panel's October 31, 2019 order of suspension.

After review proceedings held pursuant to MCR 9.118, the Board issued an order that affirmed, in part, modified, in part, and reversed, in part, the hearing panel's findings of misconduct, as set forth in an accompanying opinion. The Board's order also reduced the discipline imposed from a one-year suspension to a 180-day suspension, effective October 16, 2021, and until further order of the Supreme Court, the Attorney Discipline Board, or a hearing panel, and until respondent complies with the requirements of MCR 9.123(B) and (C) and MCR 9.124. Costs were assessed totaling \$5,660.63.