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NOTICE OF SUSPENSION AND RESTITUTION WITH CONDITION

Case No. 18-130-GA

Notice Issued: September 14, 2021

James Lawrence, P 33664, Mt. Clemens, Michigan, by the Michigan Supreme Court

Suspension - 100 Days, effective June 11, 2020

The Grievance Administrator filed a formal complaint which alleged that respondent committed professional misconduct in his representation of a client who was seeking reversal of his 1981 conviction for 1st degree felony murder via a motion for relief from judgment. The Grievance Administrator filed a motion for summary disposition requesting a finding of misconduct based on MCR 2.116(C)(10), as there was no genuine issue of material fact presented by the admissions made in respondent's amended answer to the complaint. Respondent did not contest the motion, thus the hearing panel entered an order granting summary disposition as to all of the allegations of professional misconduct set forth in the formal complaint.

The panel found that respondent failed to promptly pay or deliver funds which a client or third person were entitled to receive, in violation of MRPC 1.15(b)(3); failed to hold property of clients or third persons in connection with a representation separate from the lawyer's own property, in violation of MRPC 1.15(d); failed to deposit legal fees and expenses that were paid in advance into a client trust account, in violation of MRPC 1.15(g); and withdrew fees paid in advance prior to earning the fees, in violation of MRPC 1.15(g). Respondent was also found to have violated MRPC 8.4(b) and MCR 9.104(1)-(3).

The panel ordered that respondent's license to practice law be suspended for a period of 100 days, that he pay restitution in the total amount of \$2,000, and that he be subject to conditions relevant to the established misconduct. The Grievance Administrator filed a petition for review, seeking an increase in discipline. On September 29, 2020, the Board issued an opinion and order increasing discipline from a 100-day suspension to disbarment, affirming the restitution provision and vacating the conditions imposed by the hearing panel. On October 23, 2020, respondent filed a timely application for leave to appeal with the Michigan Supreme Court, pursuant to MCR 9.122. On June 18, 2021, the Court issued an order reversing the Attorney Discipline Board's opinion and order, and reinstating Tri-County Hearing Panel #101's May 20, 2020 order of suspension and restitution with condition. On June 29, 2021, the Grievance Administrator filed a motion for stay and, on June 30, 2021, the Grievance Administrator filed a motion for reconsideration of the Court's June 18, 2021 order. Respondent filed an affidavit pursuant to MCR 9.123(A), as amended January 1, 2020, on July 26, 2021. On July 27, 2021, an Order of Reinstatement was issued by the Board. On September 9, 2021, the Supreme Court denied the motions filed by the Grievance Administrator. Costs were assessed in the total amount of \$2,497.96.