

**BEFORE THE DISTRICT 9 GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE
EVIDENTIARY PANEL 9-3
STATE BAR OF TEXAS**

COMMISSION FOR LAWYER	§	
DISCIPLINE,	§	
Petitioner	§	
	§	201604691
V.	§	
	§	
MELISSA ANN DEUTSCH,	§	
Respondent	§	

AGREED JUDGMENT OF PUBLIC REPRIMAND

Parties and Appearance

On this day, came to be heard the above styled and numbered cause. Petitioner and Respondent, Melissa Ann Deutsch, Texas Bar Number 24063946 announce that an agreement has been reached on all matters including the imposition of a Public Reprimand.

Jurisdiction and Venue

The Evidentiary Panel 9-3, having been duly appointed to hear this complaint by the chair of the Grievance Committee for State Bar of Texas District 9, finds that it has jurisdiction over the parties and the subject matter of this action, and that venue is proper.

Professional Misconduct

The Evidentiary Panel, having considered the pleadings, admissions, stipulations and agreements of the parties, finds Respondent has committed Professional Misconduct as defined by Rule 1.06(W) of the Texas Rules of Disciplinary Procedure.

Findings of Fact

Petitioner and Respondent agree to the following findings of fact. Accordingly, the Evidentiary Panel finds:

1. Respondent is an attorney licensed to practice law in Texas and is a member of the State Bar of Texas.
2. Respondent resides in and maintains her principal place of practice in Travis County, Texas.
3. On June 19, 2013, Complainant, Hopie Garcia, paid Respondent, Melissa Ann Deutsch, \$3,000 to represent a special needs trust in the partition of certain real property. Complainant is the trustee of the trust. After June of 2014, Respondent performed no legal work on the case except for filing a motion to retain, which was granted. During the representation, Respondent frequently failed to respond to telephone calls and emails wherein Complainant requested information regarding the status of the case. On February 8, 2016, a notice of dismissal for want of prosecution was sent to Respondent. On or before March of 2016, Respondent closed her law practice without notice to Complainant. On March 23, 2016, Respondent told Complainant that she would provide Complainant with her file, an invoice and refund of unused fees. However, Respondent failed to provide the files, invoice or any refund until after receiving notice of the grievance a year later.
4. The Chief Disciplinary Counsel of the State Bar of Texas has incurred reasonable attorneys' fees and direct expenses associated with this Disciplinary Proceeding in the amount of \$766.76.

Conclusions of Law

Petitioner and Respondent agree that, based on the foregoing findings of fact, the following Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct have been violated. Accordingly, the Evidentiary Panel concludes that the following Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct have been violated: 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.14(b), and 1.15(d).

Sanction

It is AGREED and ORDERED that a Public Reprimand shall be imposed against Respondent in accordance with the Texas Rules of Disciplinary Procedure.

Attorney's Fees and Expenses

It is further AGREED and ORDERED Respondent shall pay all reasonable and necessary attorney's fees and direct expenses to the State Bar of Texas in the amount of \$766.76. The payment of attorney's fees and direct expenses shall be made by certified or cashier's check or money order and made payable to the State Bar of Texas. The payment shall be submitted to the State Bar of

Texas, Chief Disciplinary Counsel's Office, P.O. Box 12487, Austin, TX 78711-2487 (1414 Colorado St., Austin, TX 78701) on or before the date this judgment is presented to the Evidentiary Panel for execution.

It is further AGREED and ORDERED that all amounts ordered herein are due to the misconduct of Respondent, and are assessed as a part of the sanction in accordance with Rule 1.06(Z) of the Texas Rules of Disciplinary Procedure. Any amount not paid shall accrue interest at the maximum legal rate per annum until paid and the State Bar of Texas shall have all writs and other post-judgment remedies against Respondent in order to collect all unpaid amounts.

Publication

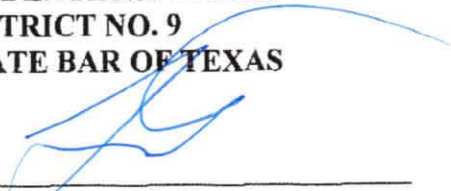
This reprimand shall be made a matter of record and appropriately published in accordance with the Texas Rules of Disciplinary Procedure.

Other Relief

All requested relief not expressly granted herein is expressly DENIED.

SIGNED this 24th day of February, 2020.

**EVIDENTIARY PANEL
DISTRICT NO. 9
STATE BAR OF TEXAS**

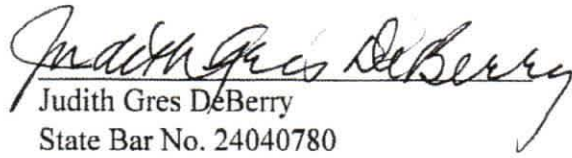


**F. Witcher McCullough
District 9-3 Presiding Member**

AGREED AS TO BOTH FORM AND SUBSTANCE:



Melissa Ann Deutsch
State Bar No. 24063946
Respondent



Judith Gres DeBerry
State Bar No. 24040780
Counsel for Petitioner