

## DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Contact the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel at 877-953-5535, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals at 512-427-1578 or txboda.org, or the State Commission on Judicial Conduct at 512-463-5533. Some attorneys might share the same or similar names. To identify an attorney, please verify using that attorney's bar card number. Go to [texasbar.com](https://texasbar.com) and use the "Find a Lawyer" tool to search for an attorney.

### JUDICIAL ACTIONS

To read the entire public sanctions, go to [scjc.texas.gov](https://scjc.texas.gov).

On December 11, 2024, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct issued a public reprimand to **JAMES OAKLEY**, county judge in Burnet, Burnet County.

On December 18, 2024, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct issued a public admonition and order of additional education to **STEPHEN ROGERS**, judge of the 268th District Court in Richmond, Fort Bend County. Rogers has filed a notice of appeal with the Supreme Court of Texas. The appeal is pending.

### BODA

On January 3, 2025, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals entered an agreed judgment of probated suspension in the reciprocal discipline case against Salt Lake City, Utah, attorney **JOHN CLIFFORD HEATH** [#24059308]. On June 11, 2024, an Order of Discipline: Probation was entered by the Third Judicial District Court in and for Salt Lake County, State of Utah, in the matter styled *In the Matter of the Discipline of: John C. Heath #8975*, Civil No. 240904297, in which Heath was placed on probation for two years. Heath agreed he violated Utah Rules of Professional Conduct 8.4(d) (conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice) and 7.1 (false or misleading communication regarding the lawyer's services). He is suspended for two years with the suspension fully probated, beginning January 3, 2025, and extending through January 2, 2027. BODA Case No. 70320

### SUSPENSIONS

On December 31, 2024, **CARL N. WHITE** [#24026524], of Denison, agreed to an 18-month fully probated suspension, beginning December 15, 2024, and ending June 15, 2026. An investigatory panel of the District 1 Grievance Committee found that

White represented the complainant in a criminal matter. White failed to keep the complainant reasonably informed and failed to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from the complainant. White failed to explain the matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the complainant to make informed decisions regarding the representation. White failed to hold funds belonging in whole or in part to the complainant separate from his own property and failed to keep the funds in a separate trust or escrow account. Upon termination of representation, White failed to refund advance payments of fees that had not been earned. White also failed to file a response to the grievance.

White violated Rules 1.03(a), 1.03(b), 1.14(a), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$750 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On December 11, 2024, **SUFI NASIM AHMAD** [#24014186], of Spring, received a default judgment of active suspension, beginning December 16, 2024, and ending December 16, 2027. An evidentiary panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that Ahmad violated a disciplinary or disability order or judgment and Ahmad failed to timely furnish a response to the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel.

Ahmad violated Rules 8.04(a)(7) and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$1,840 in attorneys' fees and costs.

On December 12, 2024, **SHAMIM EBRAHIMI** [#24072907] of Dallas, received a 12-month partially probated suspension, beginning December 16, 2024, and ending December 15, 2025, with the first six months actively suspended and the remainder probated. An evidentiary panel of the District

### ATTORNEY GRIEVANCES

#### DON'T REPRESENT YOURSELF!

How often do you advise clients to represent themselves when accused of wrongdoing?

Why give yourself different advice?

#### CONSULTATION OR REPRESENTATION

### STEVEN L. LEE

#### OVER 40 YEARS EXPERIENCE

11 years experience with the State Bar of Texas as Assistant and Deputy General Counsel as well as Acting General Counsel

#### LAW OFFICE OF STEVEN L. LEE, P.C.

1411 WEST AVENUE, SUITE 100  
AUSTIN, TEXAS 78701

(512) 215-2355

Representing Lawyers & Law Students Since 1991

STATEWIDE REPRESENTATION

## STATE BAR GRIEVANCE DEFENSE

## LEGAL MALPRACTICE

Over 30 Years  
Experience

### WAYNE H. PARIS

Two Riverway, Suite 1080  
Houston, Texas 77056  
(713) 951-9100

Statewide Representation

6 Grievance Committee found that on September 26, 2023, Ebrahimi appeared in a criminal matter and represented to the court that he was the attorney of record for a criminal defendant. However, Ebrahimi was actively suspended from the practice of law. Ebrahimi failed to file a response to the grievance. Ebrahimi engaged in the practice of law when his right to practice had been administratively suspended for failure to timely pay required fees.

Ebrahimi violated Rules 3.03(a)(1), 8.04(a)(3), 8.04(a)(8), and 8.04(a)(11). He was ordered to pay \$2,037.50 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On January 13, 2025, **SCOTTIE ALLEN** [#01058020], of Dallas, agreed to a 12-month fully probated suspension, beginning January 1, 2025, and ending December 31, 2025. The 44th Judicial District Court of Dallas found that Allen committed professional misconduct by

violating the terms of a prior disciplinary judgment.

Allen violated Rule 8.04(a)(7). He was ordered to pay \$550 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On January 8, 2025, **MATTHEW STUART HALPIN** [#24101854], of Houston, accepted a one-year partially probated suspension, with the first six months actively suspended, effective February 1, 2025. An investigatory panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that Halpin committed a serious crime or any other criminal act that reflects adversely on his honesty, trustworthiness, or fitness as a lawyer in other respects. Furthermore, Halpin engaged in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.

Halpin violated Rules 8.04(a)(2) and 8.04(a)(3). He was ordered to pay \$1,500 in attorneys' fees.

On January 16, 2025, **JAMES BRUCE**

**HARRIS** [#24026926], of Wichita Falls, agreed to a 12-month fully probated suspension, beginning February 1, 2025, and ending January 31, 2026. An investigatory panel of the District 14 Grievance Committee found that on or about March 2024, Harris was court appointed to represent the complainant's husband in a criminal matter. Harris failed to file a response to the grievance.

Harris violated Rule 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$750 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On January 29, 2025, **PAUL AUSTIN SARTIN** [#24034668], of Carrollton, received a 36-month partially probated suspension. Sartin will be actively suspended from February 1, 2025, to January 31, 2027, and on a probated suspension beginning February 1, 2027, and ending January 31, 2028. An evidentiary panel of the District 6 Grievance Committee found in the first case, the complainant hired Sartin in a civil case and paid him \$4,500. Thereafter, Sartin neglected the complainant's case and frequently failed to carry out his obligations owed to the complainant by failing to respond to pleadings, failing to respond to discovery requests, and failing to appear for hearings. After terminating Sartin's representation, the complainant requested a refund but the refund check was twice returned for insufficient funds. Sartin failed to safeguard the complainant's funds in a trust account and failed to keep her funds separate from his own. Sartin failed to file a response to the grievance.

In the second case, the evidentiary panel found that the complainant hired Sartin for her deceased husband's probate case and paid Sartin \$3,510 for the case and \$1,100 for an ad litem. On or about March 7, 2022, Sartin filed an application for independent administration and declaration of heirship but performed no other work on the complainant's case. Sartin never requested an ad litem. The complainant hired Sartin for a second issue involving her father-in-law's estate. The complainant paid Sartin \$1,500, but Sartin did no work on the case. Sartin

**Representing Attorneys**

# Gaines West

**State-wide Practice**  
State Bar of Texas  
Grievance Oversight Committee  
Appointed by the Texas Supreme Court  
Chair, 2006-2010  
Member, 2004-2010

**Texas Board of Disciplinary Appeals**  
Appointed by the Texas Supreme Court  
Chairman, 2001-2003  
Vice Chairman, 1994-1996, 1998-2000  
Member, 1992-1996, 1997-2003

**State Bar of Texas**  
Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct Committee  
Member, 1993-1996

**Disciplinary Review Committee**  
Member, 1991-1992

Texas Bar Foundation, Fellow  
State Bar of Texas, Member  
Brazos County Bar Association, Member  
Austin Bar Association, Member

**WEST • WEBB  
ALLBRITTON  
& GENTRY**

Principal Office – 979.694.7000  
1515 Emerald Plaza • College Station, TX 77845  
Austin – 512.501.3617  
1012 Rio Grande St. • Austin, TX 78701

**westwebb.law**

*Grievance Defense and  
Ethics Consultations*

**LAURA POPPS**

Headed the Austin Region and  
directed CDC's Statewide Programs  
Office of the Chief Disciplinary Counsel  
2009–2018

Laura's work at CDC provides  
unparalleled experience and  
firsthand knowledge of the  
attorney grievance system.

PUT THAT EXPERIENCE  
TO WORK FOR YOU

**Popps** | LAW & CONSULTING

POPPSLAW.COM  
LAURA@POPPSLAW.COM  
(512) 865-5185  
Austin, Texas 78750

**BOARD  
CERTIFIED**  
Texas Board of Legal Specialization  
CRIMINAL LAW

failed to safeguard the complainant’s funds in a trust account and failed to keep her funds separate from his own. Sartin failed to file a response to the grievance.

In the third case, the evidentiary panel found that the complainant hired Sartin for the administration of her father’s estate. The complainant paid Sartin \$2,477. Thereafter, Sartin failed to respond to the complainant’s attempts to contact him, failed to keep her informed about the status of her case, and failed to comply with reasonable requests for information. Other than opening a case in probate court, Sartin did no other work on the complainant’s case. The complainant terminated Sartin’s representation in or about July 2022. Although Sartin was no longer the complainant’s attorney, on or about April 23, 2023, Sartin made two unauthorized charges on the complainant’s account—one for \$300 and one for \$170. Sartin failed to file a response to the grievance.

Sartin violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.01(b)(2), 1.03(a), 1.14(a), 1.15(d), 8.04(a)(3), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$4,000 in restitution in the first case, \$5,310 in restitution in the second case, and \$2,947 in restitution in the third case. Sartin was also ordered to pay \$5,160 in attorneys’ fees and direct expenses.

**PRIVATE REPRIMANDS**

Listed here is a breakdown of Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct violations for six attorneys, with the number in parentheses indicating the frequency of the violation. Please note that an attorney may be reprimanded for more than one rule violation.

1.01(b)(1)—In representing a client, a lawyer shall not neglect a legal matter entrusted to the lawyer (1).

1.03(a)—Failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information (2).

1.03(b)—Failing to explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation (2).

1.14(a)—Failing to hold funds and other property belonging in whole or part to clients or third persons in a lawyer’s possession separate from the lawyer’s own property (1).

1.14(b)—Upon receiving funds or other property in which a client or third person has an interest, a lawyer shall promptly notify the client or third person. Except as stated in this rule or otherwise permitted by law or by agreement with the client, a lawyer shall promptly deliver to the client or third person any funds or other property that the client or third person is entitled to receive and, upon request by the client or third person, shall promptly render a full accounting regarding such property (1).

1.15(d)—Upon termination of representation, a lawyer shall take steps to the extent reasonably practicable to protect a client’s interests, such as giving reasonable notice to the client, allowing time for employment of other counsel, surrendering papers and property to which the client is entitled, and refunding any advance payments of fees that have not been earned. The lawyer may retain papers relating to the client to the extent permitted by other law only if such retention will not prejudice the client in the subject matter of the representation (1).

8.04(a)(8)—A lawyer shall not fail to timely furnish to the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel or a district grievance committee a response or other information as required by the Texas Rules of Disciplinary Procedure, unless he or she in good faith timely asserts a privilege or other legal ground for failure to do so (1). **TBJ**

**NED BARNETT**

**CRIMINAL DEFENSE**

*Defending Texans Since 1994*

Former Assistant United States Attorney  
 Former Assistant District Attorney  
 Founding Member of the National College of DUI Defense  
 of Counsel Williams Kherkher Hart Boundas, LLP

**Law Offices of Ned Barnett**  
 8441 Gulf Freeway, Suite 600 • Houston, Texas 77017  
**713-222-6767**  
 www.nedbarnett.com

**Board Certified in Criminal Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization**