

JUDICIAL ACTIONS

To read the entire public sanctions, go to scjc.texas.gov.

On October 27, 2023, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct issued a public admonition to **BILL GAMEZ**, Poteet Municipal Court, Poteet, Atascosa County.

On October 27, 2023, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct issued a public admonition to **CLARICE WATKINS**, justice of the peace, Precinct 2, Marshall, Harrison County.

On October 12, 2023, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct issued a public reprimand and order of additional education to **CLYDE HOWSE**, justice of the peace, Precinct 3, Hondo, Medina County.

On October 4, 2023, the State Commission on Judicial Conduct issued a public admonition to **ROBERT TEJEDA**, former justice of the peace, Precinct 1, Place 1, San Antonio, Bexar County.

BODA

On November 1, 2023, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals issued a judgment of suspension in the reciprocal discipline case against Washington, D.C., attorney **GEORGE W. CRAWFORD II** [#05038500]. On March 16, 2023, an opinion and order was issued by the District of Columbia Court of Appeals in Case No. 22-BG-0937, styled *In re George W. Crawford, II, Respondent, A Suspended Member of the Bar of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals (Bar Registration No. 311639)*, in which Crawford was suspended from the practice of law for six months. That court found Crawford violated District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct: 3.1 (frivolous defense or assertion of issue), 3.3(a) (false statements of fact to tribunal), 3.4(c) (disobeying obligation under the rules of a tribunal), 8.4(a) (violating or

attempting to violate rules), 8.4(c) (dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation), and 8.4(d) (interference with the administration of justice). Crawford is suspended from the practice of law in Texas for six months beginning November 1, 2023, and ending April 30, 2024. BODA Case No. 68195.

On August 25, 2023, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals issued an agreed judgment of indefinite disability suspension against Junction attorney **KELLYE SORELLE** [#24053486]. The board found that SoRelle is suffering from a disability. SoRelle is actively suspended, effective August 25, 2023, until reinstated by the board or by a court. BODA Case No. 68194.

On November 1, 2023, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals issued a judgment in the appeal filed by Fort Worth attorney **CURTIS LILLY** [#24030063]. The board affirmed the judgment of partially probated suspension issued by an evidentiary panel of the District 6 Grievance Committee of the State Bar of Texas on January 9, 2023. The evidentiary panel found that Lilly violated Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct: 3.03(a)(1) (false statement of material fact or law to a tribunal) and 8.04(a)(3) (dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation). Lilly is suspended for 48 months, with an 18-month active suspension beginning January 23, 2023, and ending July 22, 2024, followed by a probated suspension ending on January 22, 2027. BODA Case No. 67514.

On February 2, 2023, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals issued a judgment of probated suspension in the reciprocal discipline case against Phoenix, Arizona, attorney **AARON MARK WESBROOKS** [#21191850]. On June 29, 2021, a final judgment and order was issued by the presiding disciplinary judge in Case No. 2020-9097, styled *In the Matter of a Member of the State Bar of Arizona, Mark Doss*

Wesbrooks, Bar No. 018690, in which Wesbrooks was reprimanded and placed on probation for one year. That court found that Wesbrooks violated Rules of the Supreme Court of Arizona: Rule 42, ER 1.5(c) (entering into a contingency fee agreement without a written fee agreement) and ER 1.15(a), (b)(1) (safekeeping property) and Rule 43(a), (b), (d), and (f) (trust account violations). Wesbrooks is publicly reprimanded in Texas and suspended from the practice of law for one year with the suspension fully probated beginning February 2, 2023, and ending February 1, 2024. On September 29, 2023, the Supreme Court of Texas affirmed the judgment [Case No. 23-0132]. BODA Case No. 66186.

REINSTATEMENT

ALONZO RAMOS [#00797279], of Laredo, filed a petition in the 406th

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

District Court of Webb County for reinstatement as a member of the State Bar of Texas.

SUSPENSIONS

On October 1, 2023, **FRANCIS JOSEPH KEY** [#24097255], of Chandler, received a 12-month fully probated suspension beginning October 1, 2023, and ending on October 1, 2024, related to three disciplinary matters. An evidentiary panel of the District 2 Grievance Committee found that in the first case, on or about August 10, 2018, the complainant hired Key to represent him in a child support matter. In representing the complainant, Key neglected the legal matter entrusted to him and failed to keep the complainant reasonably informed about the status of his legal matter. Upon termination of representation, Key failed to refund advance payments of fees that had not

been earned. Key also failed to file a response to the grievance.

In the second case, on or about November 23, 2018, the complainant hired Key to represent her son in connection with a felony drug case. In representing the complainant's son, Key neglected the legal matter entrusted to him and failed to keep the complainant reasonably informed about the status of her son's legal matter. Upon termination of representation, Key failed to refund advance payments of fees that had not been earned and failed to surrender property to which the complainant's son was entitled. Key also failed to file a response to the grievance.

In the third case, in approximately April 2019, the complainant hired Key to represent her in a criminal matter. In representing the complainant, Key neglected the legal matter entrusted to him and failed to keep the complainant reasonably informed about the status of her legal matter. Upon termination of representation, Key failed to refund advance payments of fees that had not been earned and failed to file a response to the grievance.

Key violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(8). In the first case he was ordered to pay \$4,000 in restitution, in the second case \$3,882 in restitution, and in the third case \$2,000 in restitution and he was ordered to pay a total of \$1,000 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses for all three cases.

On October 25, 2023, **JOHN WILLIAM STICKELS** [#19225300], of Aledo, agreed to a 12-month partially probated suspension beginning November 1, 2023, and ending on October 31, 2024, with the active suspension beginning November 1, 2023, and ending April 29, 2024, and the probated suspension to begin on May 1, 2024, and end on October 31, 2024. An evidentiary panel of the District 7 Grievance Committee found that on or about October 15, 2020, Stickels was appointed to represent the

complainant in a capital murder case. Stickels failed to keep the complainant reasonably informed about the status of his criminal matter and failed to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from the complainant about his criminal matter. Stickels failed to explain the criminal matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the complainant to make informed decisions regarding the representation.

Stickels violated Rules 1.03(a) and 1.03(b). He was ordered to pay \$2,000 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On October 25, 2023, **JOHN WILLIAM STICKELS** [#19225300], of Aledo, agreed to a 12-month partially probated suspension beginning November 1, 2023, and ending on October 31, 2024, with the active suspension beginning November 1, 2023, and ending April 29, 2024, and the probated suspension to begin on May 1, 2024, and end on October 31, 2024. An evidentiary panel of the District 7 Grievance Committee found that on or about February 23, 2019, Stickels was hired to represent the complainant in a post-conviction criminal matter. Stickels was paid \$7,500. In representing the complainant, Stickels neglected the legal matter entrusted to him by failing to perform any significant legal services. Stickels failed to keep the complainant reasonably informed about the status of his criminal matter and failed to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from the complainant about his criminal matter. Stickels failed to explain the criminal matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the complainant to make informed decisions regarding the representation. Stickels failed to respond to the grievance.

Stickels violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.03(b), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$7,500 in restitution and \$2,000 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

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

On October 12, 2023, **JOHN WILLIAM STICKELS** [#19225300], of Aledo, received a 12-month partially probated suspension beginning November 1, 2023, and ending on October 31, 2024, with the active suspension beginning November 1, 2023, and ending April 29, 2024, and the probated suspension to begin on May 1, 2024, and end on October 31, 2024. An evidentiary panel of the District 7 Grievance Committee found that on or about December 11, 2018, Stickels was hired to represent the complainant in a post-conviction criminal matter. Stickels was paid \$3,500. In representing the complainant, Stickels neglected the legal matter entrusted to him by failing to conduct the investigation and failing to perform any legal services. Stickels failed to keep the complainant reasonably informed about the status of his criminal matter and failed to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from the complainant about his criminal matter. Upon termination of representation, Stickels failed to refund advance payments of a fee that had not been earned. Stickels failed to timely furnish to the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel a response or other information as required by the Texas Rules of Disciplinary Procedure. Stickels did not in good faith timely assert a privilege or other legal ground for failure to do so.

Stickels violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$3,500 in restitution and \$3,000 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

PUBLIC REPRIMANDS

On November 5, 2023, **GAYLENE ROGERS** [#17166500], of Dallas, agreed to a public reprimand. An investigatory panel of the District 6 Grievance Committee found that the complainant hired Rogers for representation in a real estate matter. In representing the complainant, Rogers neglected the legal matter entrusted to her. Rogers failed to keep the complainant reasonably

informed and failed to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from the complainant. Upon termination of representation, Rogers failed to refund advance payments of fees that had not been earned. Rogers failed to respond to the grievance.

Rogers violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(8). She was ordered to pay \$1,062 in restitution and \$750 in attorneys' fees.

On November 16, 2023, **CHARLES K. SANDERS** [#24118667], of Houston, accepted a public reprimand. An investigatory panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that Sanders neglected a legal matter entrusted to him. Sanders failed to keep his client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information. Sanders also engaged in conduct involving

misrepresentation.

Sanders violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), and 8.04(a)(3). He was ordered to pay \$1,000 in attorneys' fees.

On November 27, 2023, **JEANETTE VILLARREAL SCHLENKER** [#00795078], of Houston, accepted a public reprimand. An investigatory panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that Schlenker failed to keep her client reasonably informed about the status of his case and further failed to promptly comply with her client's reasonable requests for information.

Schlenker violated Rule 1.03(a). She agreed to pay \$1,000 in attorneys' fees and costs.

PRIVATE REPRIMANDS

Listed here is a breakdown of Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct violations for 13 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 (4).

1.03(a)—A lawyer shall keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information (6).

1.03(b)—A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation (4).

1.08(g)—A lawyer shall not make an agreement prospectively limiting the lawyer's liability to a client for malpractice unless permitted by law and the client is independently represented in making the agreement, or settle a claim for such liability with an

unrepresented client or former client without first advising that person in writing that independent representation is appropriate in connection therewith (1).

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).

3.09(d)—The prosecutor in a criminal case shall make timely disclosure to the defense all evidence or information known to the prosecutor that tends to negate the guilt of the accused or mitigates the offense, and, in connection with sentencing, disclose to the defense and to tribunal all unprivileged mitigating information known to the prosecutor, except when the prosecutor is relieved of this responsibility by a protective order of the tribunal (1).

5.03(b)(2)(i)—With respect to a nonlawyer employed or retained by or associated with a lawyer, a lawyer shall be subject to discipline for the conduct of such a person that would be a violation of these rules if engaged in by a lawyer if the lawyer is a partner in the law firm in which the person is employed, retained by, or associated with; or is the general counsel of a government agency's legal department in which the person is employed, retained by, or associated with; or has direct supervisory authority over such person (1).

8.04(a)(3)—Engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation (2).

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 (3). **TBJ**

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

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