

DISBARMENTS

On April 15, 2021, **DIANNA LEE MCCOY** [#24026865], of Austin, was disbarred. An evidentiary panel of the District 13 Grievance Committee found that on or about October 9, 2019, McCoy was court-appointed to represent the complainant in two criminal matters. In representing the complainant, McCoy neglected the legal matter entrusted to her, failed to meet with the complainant after her appointment, 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. McCoy also failed to timely respond to the grievance.

McCoy violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), and 8.04(a)(8). She was ordered to pay \$1,796.21 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On April 28, 2021, **CHRISTINA E. PAGANO** [#07154500], of Austin, received a judgment of disbarment effective April 22, 2021. An evidentiary panel of the District 9 Grievance Committee found that a client hired Pagano in June 2018 to secure his release from custody. After the complainant gave Pagano the pin numbers to his debit card and food stamp card, Pagano withdrew \$1,450 from the client's debit card and used \$170 from the client's food stamp card as an advanced fee for her services. Pagano failed to place the funds in an escrow or trust account. With the client's permission, Pagano also took possession of the client's watch and wallet containing the client's debit card, food stamp card, identification card, and Social Security card. Pagano failed to appropriately safeguard the client's property and return them at the end of her representation. Pagano made no appearance in the case and failed to provide the legal service for which she was hired. During the disciplinary case, Pagano provided a copy of a handwritten contract and a motion to substitute counsel, both purportedly signed by the client. The panel found that Pagano's client did not sign either document and that Pagano fabricated both documents. Pagano further failed to timely provide a written response to the disciplinary case.

Pagano violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.14(a), 8.04(a)(3), and 8.04(a)(8) of the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct, Article X, Section 9, State Bar Rules. Pagano was ordered to pay \$4,850 in attorneys' fees and expenses.

SUSPENSIONS

On April 14, 2021, **BLAKE DANIEL ALLRED** [#24069292], of Bayou Vista, accepted a 24-month fully probated suspension effective April 14, 2021. An evidentiary panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that, while representing clients, Allred neglected the legal matters entrusted to him, failed to keep his clients

reasonably informed about the status of their matters and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information, failed to refund advance payments of fees that had not been earned, and 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.

Allred violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$6,300 in restitution and \$2,870.51 in attorneys' fees and expenses.

On May 27, 2021, **PAUL CEDILLO JR.** [#04043500], of Rosenberg, received a two-year fully probated suspension effective June 1, 2021. The 400th District Court of Fort Bend County found that Cedillo violated Rule 1.01(b)(1) [neglected a legal matter], Rule 1.01(b)(2) [frequently failed to carry out completely the obligations owed to the client], Rule 1.03(a) [failed to keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information], and Rule 1.04(c) [failed to communicate the basis or rate of the fee to the client].

Cedillo was ordered to pay \$300 in restitution and \$500 in attorneys' fees.

On April 28, 2021, **SHAMIM EBRAHIMI** [#24072907], of Dallas, received a 12-month fully probated suspension effective May 15, 2021. The 116th Civil District Court of Dallas County found that Ebrahimi committed professional misconduct by violating Rule 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].

Ebrahimi was ordered to pay \$3,500

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in restitution and \$2,054.53 in attorneys' fees.

On May 5, 2021, **KEITH MATTHEW GOULD** [#00795885], of Corpus Christi, accepted a six-month fully probated suspension effective June 1, 2021. The 28th District Court of Nueces County found that Gould failed to return unearned fees.

Gould violated Rule 1.15(d). He was ordered to pay \$2,500 in restitution and \$2,336.63 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On May 5, 2021, **RONALD G. GREENING** [#08402600], of Austin, accepted a 15-month fully probated suspension effective May 15, 2021. An evidentiary panel of the District 9 Grievance Committee found that in January 2019, Greening consulted with a client regarding the probating of her mother's estate and the client's stepfather paid Greening a \$5,000 advanced fee, on or about February 6, 2019, which Greening failed to place in a trust or escrow account. Subsequently, Greening sent the client a proposed fee agreement, which she did not sign because she wanted to discuss the agreement with Greening. After receiving the proposed fee agreement, the client made numerous calls to Greening, after February 11, 2019, which he did not return. On April 2, 2019, having received no information from Greening, the client terminated the representation and requested a refund. Rather than comply with the client's request, Greening sent her a letter containing his analysis of potential issues that may arise in the probating of her mother's estate. On April 16, 2019, the client hired new counsel who unsuccessfully attempted to obtain an accounting and the refund of any unearned fees from Greening. Greening failed to respond promptly to new counsel's request. On the morning of June 18, 2019, the client spoke to an employee at Greening's law firm and again requested a refund. That evening, the client received an email from Greening with an attached statement

purporting to show that the firm had earned the advanced fee.

Greening violated Rules 1.14(a), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(3). He was ordered to pay \$3,500 in restitution to the client and \$1,463 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On May 17, 2021, **ISRAEL PANDO GUARDIOLA** [#00784184], of Odessa, agreed to a one-year fully probated suspension effective May 23, 2021. An investigatory panel of the District 17 Grievance Committee found that Guardiola failed to properly supervise his non-lawyer employee.

Guardiola violated Rules 1.03(b), 5.03(b)(1), and 5.05(a). He was ordered to pay \$800 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On April 23, 2021, **GEORGE ANGELO OGGERO** [#24060360], of Houston, received a two-year fully probated suspension effective May 12, 2021. An investigatory panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that in representing the complainant in a probate matter, Oggero accepted and continued employment in a legal matter, which Oggero knew or should have known, was beyond his competence. Oggero neglected the legal matter entrusted to him.

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

On April 9, 2021, **THOMAS ANTHONY ZAKES** [#22243420], of Houston, received a two-year fully probated suspension effective June 8, 2021. An evidentiary panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that in representing the complainant in a child custody matter, Zakes neglected the legal matter entrusted to him and frequently failed to carry out completely the obligations that he owed to the client. Zakes failed to keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information. Zakes failed to explain the matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit

the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation.

Zakes violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.01(b)(2), 1.03(a), and 1.03(b).

On May 26, 2021, **RODNEY WILLIAM HAIRE** [#00795402], of Denton, agreed to a 12-month partially probated suspension effective July 15, 2021, with the first three months actively served and the remainder probated. An evidentiary panel of the District 14 Grievance Committee found that, in May 2014, the complainant hired Haire for representation in a personal injury. In November 2014, Haire settled the complainant's case without consulting the complainant and, over the course of the representation, repeatedly misrepresented to the complainant that the case was not yet settled. Haire frequently failed to carry out obligations owed to the complainant, failed to abide by the

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complainant's decisions whether to accept an offer of settlement, and failed to explain the settlement offer to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the complainant to make informed decisions regarding the representation. After settling the matter, Haire failed to provide the complainant with a written statement describing the outcome and showing the remittance and the method of its determination. Upon receiving funds in which the complainant and the medical providers had an interest, Haire failed to safeguard those funds, failed to promptly notify the complainant, and failed to promptly deliver to the complainant or the medical providers any funds they were entitled to receive, failed to promptly render a full accounting, and failed to surrender the complainant's file to her. Haire engaged in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation.

Haire violated Rules 1.01(b)(2), 1.02(a)(2), 1.03(b), 1.04(d), 1.14(a), 1.14(b), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(3). He was ordered to pay \$2,500.93 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On May 18, 2021, **JOHN VICTOR MASTRIANI** [#13184375], of Houston, accepted a 36-month partially probated suspension effective May 17, 2021, with the first seven months, 18 days actively suspended. An evidentiary panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that Mastriani neglected his client's case, failed to keep his client reasonably informed about the status of the case, and failed to return unearned fees. Mastriani further failed to timely respond to the grievance.

Mastriani violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$750 in restitution and \$1,250 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On May 25, 2021, **JOHN VICTOR MASTRIANI** [#13184375], of Houston, accepted a 36-month partially probated suspension effective May 17, 2021, with the first seven months, 18 days actively suspended. An evidentiary panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that Mastriani neglected his client's case, failed to keep his client reasonably informed about the status of the case, and failed to return unearned fees. Mastriani further engaged in the practice of law while administratively suspended for failure to timely pay dues and failure to comply with State Bar Rules relating to mandatory continuing legal education.

Mastriani violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(11). He was ordered to pay \$750 in restitution and \$1,200 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On May 18, 2021, **JOHN VICTOR MASTRIANI** [#13184375], of Houston, accepted a 36-month partially probated suspension effective May 17, 2021, with the first seven months, 18 days actively suspended. An evidentiary panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that Mastriani neglected his client's case, failed to keep his client reasonably informed about the status of the case, and failed to return unearned fees. Mastriani further failed to timely respond to the grievance.

Mastriani violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$1,000 in restitution and \$716 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On May 18, 2021, **JOHN VICTOR MASTRIANI** [#13184375], of Houston, accepted a 36-month partially probated suspension effective May 17, 2021, with the first seven months, 18 days actively suspended. An evidentiary panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that Mastriani neglected his client's case, failed to keep his client reasonably informed about the status of the case, and failed to return unearned fees. Mastriani further failed to timely respond to the grievance.

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Mastriani violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$750 in restitution and \$716 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On May 18, 2021, **JOHN VICTOR MASTRIANI** [#13184375], of Houston, accepted a 36-month partially probated suspension effective May 17, 2021, with the first seven months, 18 days actively suspended. An evidentiary panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that Mastriani neglected his client's case, failed to keep his client reasonably informed about the status of the case, and failed to return unearned fees. Mastriani further failed to timely respond to the grievance.

Mastriani violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$2,500 in restitution and \$666 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On May 19, 2021, **JOHN VICTOR MASTRIANI** [#13184375], of Houston, accepted a 36-month partially probated suspension effective May 17, 2021, with the first seven months, 18 days actively suspended. An evidentiary panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that Mastriani neglected his client's case, failed to keep his client reasonably informed about the status of the case, and failed to return unearned fees. Mastriani further failed to timely respond to the grievance.

Mastriani violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$500 in restitution and \$600 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On May 19, 2021, **JOHN VICTOR MASTRIANI** [#13184375], of Houston, accepted a 36-month partially probated suspension effective May 17, 2021, with the first seven months, 18 days actively suspended. An evidentiary panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that Mastriani failed to carry out completely the obligations owed to his client, failed to keep his client reasonably informed about the status of

the case, and failed to return unearned fees. Mastriani further failed to timely respond to the grievance.

Mastriani violated Rules 1.01(b)(2), 1.03(a), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$600 in restitution and \$616 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On May 18, 2021, **JOHN VICTOR MASTRIANI** [#13184375], of Houston, accepted a 36-month partially probated suspension effective May 17, 2021, with the first seven months, 18 days actively suspended. An evidentiary panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that Mastriani failed to carry out completely the obligations owed to his client and failed to keep his client reasonably informed about the status of the case. Mastriani further failed to timely respond to the grievance.

Mastriani violated Rules 1.01(b)(2), 1.03(a), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered

to pay \$98 in restitution and \$750 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On April 15, 2021, **CHRISTINA E. PAGANO** [#07154500], of Austin, received a three-year partially probated suspension effective April 13, 2021, (18 months active and 18 months probated) related to two corresponding disciplinary cases. An evidentiary panel of the District 9 Grievance Committee found that, on or about September 1, 2019, a friend of the client paid Pagano an advanced fee of \$2,000 to represent the client in a criminal matter. Pagano failed to place the advanced fee into a trust or escrow account and failed to make an appearance in the case. Additionally, Pagano had the client, who does not read English, sign a contract that was in English. Pagano failed to explain the terms of the contract to the client. After the client hired new counsel, Pagano failed to

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return any unearned fee, a copy of the contract, or any documents in the client's file.

Pagano violated Rules 1.03(b), 1.14(a), 1.14(b), and 1.15(d) of the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct, Article X, Section 9, State Bar Rules. Pagano was ordered to pay \$2,000 in restitution and \$3,902.80 in attorneys' fees and expenses.

On May 20, 2021, **MICHAEL KERRY RUSSELL** [#17420700], of Dallas, agreed to a 12-month partially probated suspension effective June 1, 2021, with the first six months actively served and the remainder probated. An investigatory panel of the District 6 Grievance Committee found that Russell neglected the legal matter entrusted to him, failed to communicate with the complainant, and upon termination of representation, failed to surrender papers and property to which

the complainant was entitled.

Russell violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), and 1.15(d). He was ordered to pay \$250 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On May 21, 2021, **ARTHUR R. EURESTE** [#06702250], of Houston, accepted a three-year active suspension effective August 1, 2021. The 270th Civil Court of Harris County found that Eureste neglected his client's legal matter, failed to keep his client reasonably informed about the status of her case, and failed to promptly comply with his client's reasonable requests for information. Eureste further failed to timely respond to the grievance.

Eureste violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$1,000 in attorneys' fees.

On April 15, 2021, **DIANNA LEE MCCOY** [#24026865], of Austin,

received a 12-month active suspension effective May 1, 2021. An evidentiary panel of the District 13 Grievance Committee found that on or about January 11, 2019, McCoy was court-appointed to represent the complainant in a criminal matter. In representing the complainant, McCoy neglected the legal matter entrusted to her, 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. McCoy also failed to timely respond to the grievance.

McCoy violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), and 8.04(a)(8). She was ordered to pay \$1,696.21 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

PUBLIC REPRIMANDS

On April 29, 2021, **JANA LEWIS-PEREZ** [#24077463], of Pearland, accepted a public reprimand. An investigatory panel of the District 5 Grievance Committee found that Lewis-Perez neglected a legal matter entrusted to her and failed to keep her client reasonably informed about the status of his legal matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information about the case. Upon termination of representation, Lewis-Perez failed to refund any advance payments of fees that had not been earned. Lastly, Lewis-Perez knowingly made a false statement of material fact or law to a tribunal.

Lewis-Perez violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.15(d), 3.03(a)(1), and 8.04(a)(8). She was ordered to pay \$1,500 in restitution and \$1,000 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On April 15, 2021, **DIANNA LEE MCCOY** [#24026865], of Austin, received a public reprimand. An evidentiary panel of the District 13 Grievance Committee found that on or about January 12, 2016, McCoy was court-appointed to represent the complainant in a criminal matter. In representing the complainant, McCoy failed to keep the complainant reasonably informed about the status of

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his case and failed to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from the complainant. McCoy also failed to timely respond to the grievance.

McCoy violated Rules 1.03(a) and 8.04(a)(8). She was ordered to pay \$2,802.21 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On April 15, 2021, **DIANNA LEE MCCOY** [#24026865], of Austin, received a public reprimand. An evidentiary panel of the District 13 Grievance Committee found that on or about January 14, 2019, the complainant filed a complaint against McCoy. Thereafter, McCoy failed to timely respond to the grievance.

McCoy violated Rule 8.04(a)(8). She was ordered to pay \$2,431.21 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

PRIVATE REPRIMANDS

Listed here is a breakdown of Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct violations for 11 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)—for neglecting a legal matter entrusted to the lawyer (3).

1.01(b)(2)—In representing a client, a lawyer shall not frequently fail to carry out completely the obligations that the lawyer owes to a client or clients (1).

1.03(a)—for failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information (8).

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 (3).

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(a)(3)—A lawyer shall decline to represent a client or, where representation has commenced, shall withdraw, except as stated in paragraph (c), from the representation of a client, if the lawyer is discharged, with or without good cause (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 (2).

3.04(d)—A lawyer shall not knowingly disobey, or advise the client to disobey, an obligation under the standing rules of or a ruling by a tribunal except for an open refusal based either on an assertion that no valid obligation exists or on the client's willingness to accept any sanctions arising from such disobedience (1).

8.02(b)—A lawyer who is a candidate for judicial office shall comply with the applicable provisions of the Texas Code of Judicial Conduct (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**

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