

NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

BEFORE THE
GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR
98G0343(III)

IN THE MATTER OF)

J. BROOKS REITZEL,
ATTORNEY AT LAW)

REPRIMAND

On October 15, 1998, the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar met and considered the grievance filed against you by the North Carolina State Bar.

Pursuant to section .0113(a) of the Discipline and Disability Rules of the North Carolina State Bar, the Grievance Committee conducted a preliminary hearing. After considering the information available to it, including your response to the letter of notice, the Grievance Committee found probable cause. Probable cause is defined in the rules as "reasonable cause to believe that a member of the North Carolina State Bar is guilty of misconduct justifying disciplinary action."

The rules provide that after a finding of probable cause, the Grievance Committee may determine that the filing of a complaint and a hearing before the Disciplinary Hearing Commission are not required, and the Grievance Committee may issue various levels of discipline depending upon the misconduct, the actual or potential injury caused, and any aggravating or mitigating factors. The Grievance Committee may issue an admonition, a reprimand, or a censure to the respondent attorney.

A reprimand is a written form of discipline more serious than an admonition issued in cases in which an attorney has violated one or more provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct and has caused harm or potential harm to a client, the administration of justice, the profession, or a member of the public, but the misconduct does not require a censure.

The Grievance Committee was of the opinion that a censure is not required in this case and issues this reprimand to you. As chairman of the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar, it is now my duty to issue this reprimand, and I am certain that you will understand fully the spirit in which this duty is performed.


In early March 1998, you sent out one or more letters to other attorneys in Guilford County announcing that you had left your former firm and opened your own law office on Jan. 1, 1998. The letter invited other attorneys to refer bankruptcy work to you. As part of your solicitation for these referrals, you stated that "... I have served and continue to serve on the Chapter 7 Panel of Bankruptcy Trustees for the Middle District of North Carolina."

This statement was misleading, as you were aware prior to March 1998 that you had not been reappointed to the bankruptcy panel. While you still were serving as a trustee respecting a number of bankruptcy cases, this is not the same as serving as a member of the panel. Your conduct in this matter violated Rule 7.1(a) of the Revised Rules of Professional Conduct, which forbids attorneys from making a false or misleading statement about themselves or their services.

You are hereby reprimanded by the North Carolina State Bar due to your professional misconduct. The Grievance Committee trusts that you will heed this reprimand, that it will be remembered by you, that it will be beneficial to you, and that you will never again allow yourself to depart from adherence to the high ethical standards of the legal profession.

In accordance with the policy adopted October 15, 1981 by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar regarding the taxing of the administrative and investigative costs to any attorney issued a reprimand by the Grievance Committee, the costs of this action in the amount of \$50.00 are hereby taxed to you.

Done and ordered, this 2 day of November, 1998.


James K. Dorsett, III
Chair, Grievance Committee