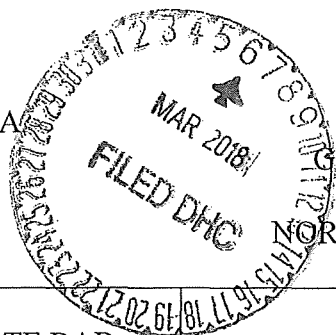


STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY



BEFORE THE
GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR
16G1286

THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR,
Petitioner

v.

J. RONALD DENMAN, Attorney,
Respondent

ORDER OF
RECIPROCAL DISCIPLINE

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as Chairperson of the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar by 27 N.C. Admin. Code Chapter 1, Subchapter B, Rules .0105(a)(12) and .0120(b)(3) (formerly codified at .0116(b)(3)) of the North Carolina State Bar Discipline & Disability Rules, and based upon the record in this matter, the undersigned finds as follows:

1. On 10 November 2016, the Supreme Court of Florida issued an Order in *Florida Bar v. Joseph Ronald Denman*, No. SC16-774, suspending J. Ronald Denman (hereinafter "Denman") for 30 days for his conduct in violation of the Rules Regulating the Florida Bar.

2. Denman was licensed in North Carolina via examination in 2008.

3. Pursuant to 27 N.C. Admin. Code Chapter 1, Subchapter B, Rule .0120(b) (formerly codified at .0116(b)) of the North Carolina State Bar Discipline & Disability Rules, on 28 August 2017, Denman was served with the North Carolina State Bar's Notice of Reciprocal Discipline Proceeding ("Notice"). The State Bar's Notice cited the Order of suspension in *Denman*.

4. The Order issued by the Supreme Court of Florida in *Denman* was predicated on the following facts:

- a. In June 2011, in *In re: Former Marriage of Joseph Ronald Denman and Hayley Lynn Denman*, Case No. 04-19625-FC-29-PJ in the Circuit Court of the Eleventh Judicial District of Miami-Dade County, Denman engaged in a conflict of interest and actions inconsistent with orderly judicial proceedings. Denman represented his prior employer/client in a deposition. The prior employer/client sought to invoke trade secret privilege to keep certain information from disclosure, and Denman asserted objections at the deposition on the employer's behalf. As a party, Denman faced a potential conflict of interest between his own interest in the family law proceeding and the former employer/client's business interests.

- b. In January 2011, while serving in his role as vice president/in-house counsel for his employer/client, who was also the president and sole owner of the company, Denman obtained a loan from the employer/client without obtaining a written waiver of conflict from the employer/client and also otherwise failed to fully and properly document the transactions. Although the employer/client was a sophisticated businessman and the transaction appeared to be fair, Denman's failure to properly document the transaction caused the family law proceeding (referenced *supra*) to be more lengthy and involved.

5. The Supreme Court of Florida found that Denman's conduct violated the following Rules Regulating the Florida Bar: Rule 4-1.7 (conflict of interest) and Rule 4-1.8 (business transaction with client).

6. The State Bar's Notice directed Denman to inform the Grievance Committee within 30 days of service of any reason why imposition of the identical discipline by the State Bar would be unwarranted. The Notice further advised that if no response was received within 30 days, the Chairperson of the Grievance Committee would sign an order imposing reciprocal discipline.

7. By letter dated 17 September 2017, Denman indicated his consent to the imposition of reciprocal discipline and requested that the reciprocal discipline be deemed to have run from 18 November to 19 December 2016, concurrently with the suspension of his license in Florida.

BASED UPON THE FOREGOING FINDINGS, the Chairperson of the Grievance Committee makes the following CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

1. The North Carolina State Bar has jurisdiction over the subject matter of this proceeding and over the person of J. Ronald Denman.

2. The State Bar has complied with the procedure for imposition of reciprocal discipline pursuant to 27 N.C. Admin. Code Chapter 1, Subchapter B, Rule .0120 (formerly codified at .0116) of the North Carolina State Bar Discipline & Disability Rules.

3. The conduct found by the Supreme Court of Florida constitutes conduct in violation of Rules 1.7 and 1.8(a) of the North Carolina Rules of Professional Conduct and justifies the imposition of reciprocal discipline in this state.

4. The equivalent discipline imposed by the Supreme Court of Florida should be imposed on Denman's record in the State of North Carolina. The equivalent discipline in North Carolina to that imposed by the Supreme Court of Florida is suspension for 30 days.

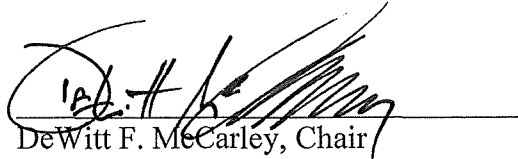
THEREFORE IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. J. Ronald Denman is hereby suspended for 30 days from the practice of law in North Carolina.

2. The suspension of Denman's license in North Carolina is deemed to have run concurrently with the suspension of his license in Florida, from 18 November to 19 December 2016.

3. In accordance with the policy adopted 23 July 2010 by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar regarding the taxing of administrative fees and investigative costs to any attorney issued discipline by the Grievance Committee, an administrative fee in the amount of \$350.00 is hereby taxed to Denman.

This the 22 day of February, 2018.


DeWitt F. McCarley, Chair
Grievance Committee