

NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

BEFORE THE
GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR
12G0560

IN THE MATTER OF

Ronnie C. Reaves,
Attorney At Law

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REPRIMAND

On January 24, 2013, the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar met and considered the grievance filed against you by J.W.

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 is 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.

In March 2011, S.W. signed a power of attorney naming J.W. as attorney-in-fact. D. H. is S.W.'s son. In November 2011, D.H. retained you to prepare a revocation of the power of attorney, a new power of attorney naming D.H. as S.W.'s attorney-in-fact, and a deed whereby S.W. deeded property to D.H. Without meeting or communicating with S.W., you prepared the documents and gave them to D.H. You told D.H. to have S.W. sign the documents before a

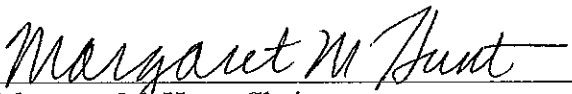
notary public and record the documents. The documents were signed on November 9, 2011 and recorded at the Halifax County register of deeds on November 10, 2011. S.W. died on November 10, 2011.

You should not have undertaken representation of S.W. or prepared legal documents on behalf of S.W. without consulting with S.W. to obtain her informed consent to the representation and to determine whether she needed or wanted the legal services requested. Further, you should have exercised independent professional judgment on behalf of S.W. and counseled S.W. with respect to the advisability of and the scope of the requested legal services. You failed to communicate with S.W. and instead prepared documents for S.W. at D.H.'s direction. You therefore violated Rules 1.4(a) and (b), 1.8(f) and 5.4(c).

You are hereby reprimanded by the North Carolina State Bar for 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 July 23, 2010 by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar regarding the taxing of administrative fees and investigative costs to any attorney issued a reprimand by the Grievance Committee, an administrative fee in the amount of \$350.00 is hereby taxed to you.

Done and ordered, this the 18th day of February, 2013.


Margaret M. Hunt, Chair
Grievance Committee

MMH/npm