

NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

BEFORE THE  
GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR  
15G1323

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IN THE MATTER OF

LINNIE W. CAUSEY,  
ATTORNEY AT LAW

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)

CENSURE

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On July 21, 2016, the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar met and considered the grievance filed against you by the North Carolina State Bar. The grievance was assigned to a Subcommittee, which thoroughly reviewed the results of the State Bar staff's investigation of this matter.

Pursuant to section .0113(a) of the Discipline and Disability Rules of the North Carolina State Bar, the Grievance Subcommittee conducted a preliminary hearing. After considering the information available to it, including your response to the letter of notice, the Grievance Subcommittee 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.

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

The Grievance Committee believes that a hearing before the Disciplinary Hearing Commission is not required in this case and issues this censure to you. As chairman of the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar, it is now my duty to issue this censure.

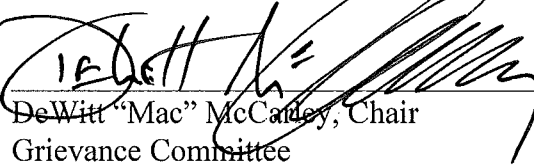
Between December 2013 and April 2015, you submitted inaccurate reimbursement requests to your law firm for CLE expenses, resulting in your receipt of funds to cover expenses that you had not actually incurred. Although you ultimately reimbursed your law firm for any funds unnecessarily disbursed to you, your submission of inaccurate requests for CLE expenses not incurred constituted dishonest conduct in violation of Rule 8.4(c). Although this conduct was concerning to the Grievance Committee and would typically result in referral to the DHC, the Committee determined that your conduct was significantly mitigated by the unique and devastating personal circumstances that you experienced which contributed to your mindset and misconduct. These circumstances subjected you to multiple instances of extreme psychological and physical distress, and the Committee is of the opinion that these exceptional circumstances distorted your judgment. Additionally, the Committee took into

consideration your efforts to proactively seek assistance for your various psychological issues, as well as the support of your former law firm.

You are hereby censured by the North Carolina State Bar for your violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct. The Grievance Committee trusts that you will ponder this censure, recognize the error that you have made, and that you will never again allow yourself to depart from adherence to the high ethical standards of the legal profession. This censure should serve as a strong reminder and inducement for you to weigh carefully in the future your responsibility to the public, your clients, your fellow attorneys and the courts, to the end that you demean yourself as a respected member of the legal profession whose conduct may be relied upon without question.

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 censure by the Grievance Committee, an administrative fee in the amount of \$350.00 is hereby taxed to you.

Done and ordered, this 14<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2016.

  
DeWitt "Mac" McCauley, Chair  
Grievance Committee  
The North Carolina State Bar

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