

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA

WAKE COUNTY

THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR,

Plaintiff

v.

MICHAEL S. WILLIAMSON, Attorney,

Defendant

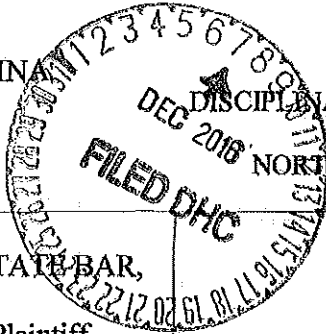
BEFORE THE

DISCIPLINARY HEARING COMMISSION

OF THE

NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR

16 DHC 27



CONSENT ORDER  
OF DISCIPLINE

This matter was considered by a Hearing Panel of the Disciplinary Hearing Commission composed of Donald C. Prentiss, Chair, and members David W. Long and Bradley Lail, pursuant to North Carolina Administrative Code, Title 27, Chapter 1, Subchapter B, § .0114(h). Plaintiff was represented by Mary D. Winstead. Defendant Michael S. Williamson appeared *pro se*. Both Plaintiff and Defendant stipulate and agree to the findings of fact and conclusions of law recited in this consent order and to the discipline imposed. Defendant freely and voluntarily stipulates to the foregoing findings of fact and consents to the conclusions of law and entry of the order of discipline. Defendant freely and voluntarily waives any and all right to appeal the entry of this consent order of discipline.

Based upon the pleadings in this matter, the parties' stipulations of fact, and with the consent of the parties, the Hearing Panel hereby finds by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence the following:

**Findings of Fact**

1. Plaintiff, the North Carolina State Bar ("State Bar"), is a body duly organized under the laws of North Carolina and is the proper party to bring this proceeding under the authority granted it in Chapter 84 of the General Statutes of North Carolina, and the Rules and Regulations of the North Carolina State Bar (Chapter 1 of Title 27 of the North Carolina Administrative Code).
2. Defendant, Michael S. Williamson, was admitted to the North Carolina State Bar in August 1995 and is, and was at all times referred to herein, an attorney at law licensed to practice in North Carolina, subject to the laws of the State of North Carolina, the Rules and Regulations of the North Carolina State Bar and the Rules of Professional Conduct.
3. During all or part of the relevant periods referred to herein, Defendant was engaged in the practice of law in the State of North Carolina and maintained a law office

in Goldsboro, Wayne County, North Carolina.

4. Defendant was properly served with process and the matter came before the Hearing Panel with due notice to all parties.

5. Defendant employed a secretary to whom he delegated the responsibility of making bank deposits. Defendant failed to properly supervise his secretary and failed to properly maintain entrusted funds in his trust account, including for clients Harry Hill, Lisa Williams, Timothy McCardell, Stanley Webb, Corey Lewis, and Anita Forsythe.

6. On April 21, 2015, payments made by client Lisa Williams in the amount of \$190.00 for the payment of fines and costs in a traffic matter and client Timothy McCardell in the amount of \$80.00 for the payment of fines and costs in a traffic matter were deposited into Defendant's trust account.

7. On April 29, 2015, prior to Defendant making any disbursements from the trust account for Lisa Williams or Timothy McCardell, Defendant's trust account balance fell to \$11.23.

8. Between April 21, 2015 and April 29, 2015, Defendant made several disbursements from the trust account on behalf of other clients. Defendant did not disburse any funds for his personal benefit during this time period.

9. Defendant disbursed and used Williams' and McCardell's entrusted funds for the benefit of someone other than Williams or McCardell.

10. On or about April 30, 2015, check number 1119 drawn on Defendant's trust account, made payable to the Wayne County Clerk of Court in the amount of \$188.00 and attributed to client Lisa Williams was presented for payment against insufficient funds.

11. In accordance with Defendant's directive to The Little Bank pursuant to Rule 1.15-2(k), The Little Bank notified the State Bar of the check presented for payment against insufficient funds.

12. Defendant informed the State Bar that there were insufficient funds in the account because several deposits had not been made as a result of his secretary being hospitalized unexpectedly.

13. On May 7, 2015, payments made by client Corey Lewis in the amount of \$190.00 for the payment of fines and costs in a traffic matter and client Stanley Webb in the amount of \$190.00 for the payment of fines and costs in a traffic matter were deposited into Defendant's trust account.

14. On May 28, 2015, prior to Defendant making any disbursements from the trust account for Corey Lewis or Stanley Webb, Defendant's trust account balance fell to

\$113.41.

15. Between May 7, 2015 and May 28, 2015, Defendant made several disbursements from the trust account on behalf of other clients. Defendant did not disburse any funds for his personal benefit during this time period.

16. Defendant disbursed and used Lewis' and Webb's entrusted funds for the benefit of someone other than Lewis or Webb.

17. On June 4, 2015, payment made by client Harry Hill in the amount of \$50.00 for the payment of fines and costs in a traffic matter was deposited into Defendant's trust account.

18. On July 2, 2015, payment made by Harry Hill in the amount of \$100.00 for the payment of fines and costs in a traffic matter was deposited into Defendant's trust account.

19. On August 4, 2015, payment made by Harry Hill in the amount of \$40.00 for the payment of fines and costs in a traffic matter was deposited into Defendant's trust account.

20. On August 13, 2015, payment made by Harry Hill in the amount of \$700.00 for the payment of fines and costs in a traffic matter was deposited into Defendant's trust account.

21. On August 18, 2015, Defendant's trust account had a negative balance and incurred an overdraft fee of \$29.00.

22. As of August 18, 2015, Defendant had made no disbursements from his trust account attributed to Harry Hill and should have maintained \$890.00 in his trust account for Harry Hill.

23. Between June 4, 2015 and August 18, 2015, Defendant made numerous disbursements from the trust account on behalf of other clients. The only disbursement to himself during this period was one payment of \$6.96 made in connection with his representation of R. Garcia.

24. Defendant disbursed and used Hill's entrusted funds for the benefit of someone other than Hill.

25. On or about September 21, 2015, check number 1155 drawn on Defendant's trust account and made payable to the Wayne County Clerk of Court in the amount of \$263.00 was presented for payment against insufficient funds.

26. In accordance with Defendant's directive to The Little Bank pursuant to Rule 1.15-2(k), The Little Bank notified the State Bar of the check presented for payment

against insufficient funds.

27. Defendant informed the State Bar that there were insufficient funds in the account because some deposits and bank fees were not deposited into the trust account due to an oversight by his secretary.

28. On or about September 28, 2015, check number 1162 drawn on Defendant's trust account and made payable to the Wayne County Clerk of Court in the amount of \$188.00 and check number 1158 drawn on Defendant's trust account and made payable to the Wayne County Clerk of Court in the amount of \$265.00 were presented for payment against insufficient funds.

29. On October 8, 2015, Defendant deposited into his trust account an additional payment made by client Corey Lewis in the amount of \$73.00 for the payment of fines and costs in a traffic matter.

30. On October 13, 2015, prior to Defendant making any disbursements from the trust account for Corey Lewis, Defendant's trust account balance fell to \$3.15.

31. Between October 8, 2015 and October 13, 2015, Defendant made one disbursement from the trust account on behalf of another client. Defendant did not disburse any funds for his personal benefit during this time period.

32. Defendant disbursed and used Lewis' entrusted funds for the benefit of someone other than Lewis.

33. On or about October 15, 2015, check number 1164 drawn on Defendant's trust account and made payable to the Wayne County Clerk of Court in the amount of \$263.00 was presented for payment against insufficient funds.

34. On October 29, 2015, payment made by client Anita Forsythe in the amount of \$263.00 for the payment of fines and costs in a traffic matter was deposited into Defendant's trust account.

35. On November 5, 2015, prior to Defendant making any disbursements from the trust account for Anita Forsythe, Defendant's trust account balance fell to \$42.15.

36. Between October 29, 2015 and November 5, 2015, Defendant made several disbursements from the trust account on behalf of other clients. Defendant did not disburse any funds for his personal benefit during this time period.

37. Defendant disbursed and used Forsythe's entrusted funds for the benefit of someone other than Forsythe.

38. On or about October 26, 2015, check number 1165 drawn on Defendant's trust account, made payable to the Wayne County Clerk of Court in the amount of \$188.00 and attributed to client Stanley Webb was presented for payment against

insufficient funds.

39. In accordance with Defendant's directive to The Little Bank pursuant to Rule 1.15-2(k), The Little Bank notified the State Bar of the check presented for payment against insufficient funds.

40. Defendant informed the State Bar that there were insufficient funds in the account because some deposits and bank fees were not deposited into the trust account due to an oversight by his secretary.

41. On or about November 9, 2015, check number 1168 drawn on Defendant's trust account and made payable to the Duplin County Clerk of Court in the amount of \$263.00 and attributed to client Shanita Jones was presented for payment against insufficient funds.

42. On or about November 20, 2015, check number 1171 drawn on Defendant's trust account, made payable to the Wayne County Clerk of Court in the amount of \$263.00 and attributed to client Corey Lewis was presented for payment against insufficient funds.

43. Despite receiving several NSF notices, Defendant failed to take steps to ensure that his secretary's handling of entrusted funds comported with the Rules of Professional Conduct.

44. Defendant failed to perform monthly and quarterly reconciliations of his bank account.

45. Defendant failed to indicate on each check drawn on his trust account from which client balance the check was drawn.

Based upon the consent of the parties and the foregoing stipulated Findings of Fact, the Hearing Panel enters the following:

#### **Conclusions of Law**

1. All parties are properly before the Hearing Panel and the Panel has jurisdiction over Defendant and the subject matter of this proceeding.

2. Defendant's conduct, as set out in the stipulated Findings of Fact above, constitutes grounds for discipline pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 84-28(b)(2) as follows:

- (a) By failing to supervise his assistant's handling of entrusted client funds and failing to review records for his trust account, Defendant failed to make reasonable efforts to ensure that his law firm had in effect measures that gave reasonable assurance that his non-lawyer assistant's conduct was compatible with Defendant's professional obligations in violation of Rule 5.3(a), and failed to supervise his non-lawyer assistant to the extent necessary to ensure that his conduct was

compatible with Defendant's professional obligations in violation of Rule 5.3(b);

- (b) By failing to compare the balance in the account as shown on his records to the bank statement balance on a monthly basis and by failing to total client ledger balances and compare them to the bank statement balance at least quarterly, Defendant failed to perform monthly or quarterly reconciliations of his attorney trust account in violation of Rule 1.15-3(d);
- (c) By failing to indicate on all checks from which client balance the checks were drawn, Defendant violated Rule 1.15-3(b)(2); and
- (d) By using entrusted funds, including funds held for the benefit of clients Harry Hill, Lisa Williams, Timothy McCardell, Stanley Webb, Corey Lewis, and Anita Forsythe for the benefit of someone other than the beneficial owner of the funds, Defendant failed to safeguard entrusted funds in violation of Rule 1.15-2(a) and (b), used entrusted property for the benefit of someone other than the beneficial owner of the funds in violation of Rule 1.15-2(j), and failed to promptly pay or deliver to the client, or to third persons as directed by the client entrusted property belonging to the client in violation of Rule 1.15-2 (m).

Upon the consent of the parties, the Hearing Panel hereby finds by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence the following additional:

#### **Findings of Fact Regarding Discipline**

1. Conducting monthly and quarterly reconciliations of the trust account are integral to the proper maintenance and protection of entrusted funds.
2. Defendant has no prior discipline.
3. There is no evidence of any dishonest or selfish motive on the part of Defendant.
4. Defendant disbursed funds for clients when there were no funds or insufficient funds in the trust account for the client, thus misusing other entrusted funds in the trust account.
5. Defendant did not have the court costs and fines in his trust account for the above identified clients when he needed to pay those funds for his clients. Defendant instead paid those costs for his clients from personal funds.
6. Defendant has acknowledged his failure to properly maintain entrusted funds.

7. The Hearing Panel has carefully considered all of the different forms of discipline available to it, including admonition, reprimand, censure, suspension, and disbarment, in considering the appropriate discipline to impose in this case.

Based on the Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law above and the additional Findings of Fact Regarding Discipline, the Hearing Panel makes the following:

**Conclusions With Respect To Discipline**

1. The Hearing Panel has carefully considered all of the different forms of discipline available to it. In addition, the Hearing Panel has considered all of the factors enumerated in 27 N.C.A.C. 1B § .0114(w)(1) of the Rules and Regulations of the North Carolina State Bar and concludes the following factors warrant suspension:

- (a) Intent of Defendant to commit acts where the harm or potential harm is foreseeable, to wit: failing to conduct reconciliations and thus compromising his ability to properly maintain and disburse entrusted funds; and
- (b) Potential negative impact of Defendant's actions on clients' or the public's perception of the profession.

2. The Hearing Panel has considered all of the factors enumerated in 27 N.C.A.C. 1B § .0114(w)(2) of the Rules and Regulations of the North Carolina State Bar and concludes no factors are present in this instance that would warrant disbarment.

3. The Hearing Panel has considered all of the factors enumerated in 27 N.C.A.C. 1B § .0114(w)(3) of the Rules and Regulations of the North Carolina State Bar and concludes the following factors are applicable in this matter:

- (a) Absence of prior disciplinary offenses;
- (b) Absence of a dishonest or selfish motive;
- (c) A pattern of misconduct;
- (d) Multiple offenses;
- (e) Cooperative attitude toward the proceedings; and
- (f) Approximately twenty years of experience in the practice of law.

4. Defendant's failure to properly maintain, manage, and handle entrusted funds betrays a vital trust clients and the public place in attorneys and the legal profession.

5. Defendant's failure to maintain his clients' court costs and fines in trust caused significant harm and potential significant harm. Defendant had to pay the court costs and fines for those clients from his personal funds. If he had not had the means to do so, his clients' ability to timely and successfully resolve their cases would have been at risk.

6. Defendant's conduct, if continued or tolerated by the Bar, poses significant potential harm to future clients.

7. The Hearing Panel has considered issuing an admonition, reprimand or censure but concludes that such discipline would not be sufficient discipline because of the gravity of the harm and potential harm to the clients. The Panel further concludes that such discipline would fail to acknowledge the seriousness of the offenses committed by Defendant and send the wrong message to attorneys regarding the conduct expected of members of the Bar in this State.

8. This Hearing Panel has considered lesser alternatives and concludes that a stayed suspension is necessary to ensure Defendant complies with necessary conditions to avoid significant harm or the potential for significant harm to clients.

9. For these reasons, this Hearing Panel finds that an order imposing discipline short of a stayed suspension of Defendant's law license would not be appropriate.

Based upon the foregoing Findings of Fact and Conclusions of Law and the Findings of Fact and Conclusion Regarding Discipline, and based upon the consent of the parties, the Hearing Panel enters the following:

#### **Order of Discipline**

1. Defendant, Michael S. Williamson, is hereby suspended from the practice of law for three years.

2. Defendant is taxed with the costs and administrative fees of this action as assessed by the Secretary. Defendant shall be served with a statement of costs and fees. Defendant shall pay the costs within thirty days of service of the statement of costs upon him.

3. The three-year suspension is stayed for a period of three years as long as Defendant complies, and continues to comply during the period of the stay, with the following conditions:

- (a) Within 30 days of the effective date of this order, Defendant shall establish written procedures to ensure that client funds are appropriately maintained and disbursed and that monthly and quarterly reconciliations of the trust account are properly conducted. If non-attorney assistants and/or a CPA will be used to assist with



these tasks, Defendant shall establish written procedures for personal review and supervision. No later than 30 days from the effective date of this order, Defendant shall submit a copy of these procedures to the Office of Counsel. Defendant shall make any adjustments required by the Office of Counsel to ensure compliance with the Rules of Professional Conduct;

- (b) Each month Defendant shall provide the Office of Counsel of the State Bar with an accurate three-way reconciliation as described in the State Bar Lawyer's Trust Account Handbook for all trust accounts maintained by Defendant. Defendant shall provide the three-way reconciliation report, client ledgers for all clients with funds in the trust account(s) during that month, ledger for any personal funds maintained in the trust account(s) for bank or credit card fees, general trust account ledger, and the bank statements, cancelled checks, and deposit slips for each month. Defendant shall also provide documentation showing he followed the procedures established under the preceding paragraph. These documents are due on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the following month – for example, the three-way reconciliation for the month of January is due on February 15;
- (c) Defendant, at his own expense, will have his trust account audited by a Certified Public Accountant ("CPA") within 90 days of service of this order. (This audit is referred to herein as "initial audit").
  - i. The CPA's initial audit must identify the beneficial owners of the funds currently in Defendant's trust account and establish whether the balance in the account is sufficient to cover all client funds Defendant should be holding in trust;
  - ii. Defendant will provide the CPA's initial audit report to the State Bar within five days of receipt along with a proposed disbursement plan; and
  - iii. Defendant will remedy any deficiencies identified in the CPA's initial audit and will bring his trust account into compliance with the Rules of Professional Conduct within 30 days of receipt of the audit report. Defendant will submit proof of any remedial action to the State Bar and to the CPA no later than 30 days after receipt of the CPA's report. Said remediation shall include Defendant personally depositing funds in the trust account to replenish any deficit in the account and properly disbursing entrusted funds as described in paragraphs (e) and (f) below.
- (d) If the CPA determines that remedial action is required, the CPA will provide to the Office of Counsel a final audit report certifying that Defendant's trust account is in compliance with the Rules of

Professional Conduct no later than 30 days after receipt of proof from Defendant that he has taken the remedial measures;

- (e) Defendant shall disburse all funds in his existing trust account to the beneficial owners within thirty days of notification that the State Bar approves of the disbursement plan;
- (f) If there are funds in the account for which the beneficial owner(s) cannot be identified, Defendant shall identify, maintain, and account for those unidentified funds until the beneficial owners are determined or until the funds are deemed abandoned under Rule 1.15-2, at which point Defendant shall escheat the funds;
- (g) After the initial audit, Defendant shall have a CPA audit his trust account(s) on a quarterly basis to ensure Defendant's compliance with the Rules of Professional Conduct. The CPA must report quarterly to the Office of Counsel concerning the compliance of Defendant's trust account(s) with the Rules of Professional Conduct, with a copy of the report sent simultaneously to Defendant. The CPA report will address whether Defendant has in the trust account(s) the client funds he should be maintaining for his clients at the time, as well as Defendant's compliance with Rules 1.15-2 and 1.15-3. The CPA's report shall include addressing the items on the CPA Report Template form which the State Bar will provide to the Defendant. The CPA's reports are due no later than 30 days after the end of each quarter (first quarter's report due April 30, second quarter's report due July 30, third quarter's report due October 30, and fourth quarter's report due January 30);
- (h) If a monthly reconciliation or the CPA quarterly audit reveals any deviation from Defendant's obligations under Rule 1.15-2 or Rule 1.15-3, Defendant shall take remedial action within 10 days of the date of the monthly report or the CPA audit and shall provide documentation showing the remedial action to the State Bar within 2 days of the date of the remedial action;
- (i) If remedial action is required as a result of the CPA quarterly audit, the CPA shall provide a subsequent report regarding whether Defendant's remedial actions were sufficient and whether Defendant's account(s) has been brought into compliance with the Rules of Professional Conduct. The CPA shall provide this report regarding remedial measures to the Office of Counsel within 30 days of Defendant providing the CPA proof of remedial action;
- (j) All CPA audits, evaluations, reports, and services referred to herein will be completed and submitted at Defendant's sole expense;

- (k) It is Defendant's sole responsibility to ensure the CPA completes and timely submits the reports as required herein;
- (l) Failure of the CPA to submit any report required by this Order shall be grounds to lift the stay and activate the suspension;
- (m) Defendant shall comply with any requests from the Office of Counsel to provide any information regarding his trust account(s) or to sign and provide any release or authorization to allow the Office of Counsel to obtain information directly from any bank in which Defendant maintains a trust account, by the deadline stated in the request;
- (n) It is Defendant's sole responsibility to ensure the CPA completes and timely submits the reports as required herein. Failure of the CPA to submit any report required by this Order shall be grounds to lift the stay and activate the suspension;
- (o) Within 30 days of the effective date of this order, Defendant shall have completed the On Demand Trust Accounting Series: Part I (Rule 1.15 Compliance) 2016 continuing legal education course available on the North Carolina Bar Association website, taught by Peter Bolac;
- (p) Each calendar year thereafter, beginning with 2017, Defendant shall complete the next subsequent part of the On Demand Trust Accounting Series by the end of that calendar year. In the final year of the stayed suspension, Defendant shall complete the course for that calendar year prior to the expiration of the stayed suspension. If there is no next subsequent part of the On Demand Trust Accounting Series available in a particular calendar year, Defendant shall identify an alternate trust accounting continuing legal education course to the Office of Counsel for approval at least 60 days prior to the end of the calendar year and shall take the approved alternate trust accounting continuing legal education course prior to the end of the calendar year;
- (q) On or before June 30 each year the stay is in effect, Defendant shall submit an affidavit certifying to the North Carolina State Bar that all general trust accounts, dedicated trust accounts, and fiduciary accounts maintained by Defendant or his law firm are administered, to the best of his knowledge, in compliance with the requirements of Rule 1.15 (including all subparts) or that he is exempt from this provision because Defendant does not maintain any trust or fiduciary accounts for North Carolina client funds;

- (r) Defendant shall ensure that all trust funds received by or placed under control of the lawyer are deposited into the trust account within twenty-four hours of receipt and that all fiduciary funds received by or placed under control of the lawyer are deposited into the applicable fiduciary or trust account within twenty-four hours of receipt;
- (s) Defendant shall keep the North Carolina State Bar Membership Department advised of his current physical business address (not a Post Office box), telephone number, and e-mail address and shall notify the Bar of any change in address within ten (10) days of such change;
- (t) Defendant shall accept all certified mail from the State Bar sent to the address on record with the Membership Department of the North Carolina State Bar;
- (u) Defendant shall respond to all letters of notice and requests for information from the North Carolina State Bar by the deadline stated therein with full and complete responses and all requested documentation;
- (v) Defendant will timely comply with the State Bar continuing legal education requirements and will pay all fees and costs assessed by the applicable deadline;
- (w) Defendant will pay all membership dues, Client Security Fund assessments, and any other related dues, fees, and/or costs by the applicable deadline;
- (x) Defendant will not violate any of the Rules of Professional Conduct in effect during the period of the stay;
- (y) Defendant will not violate any laws of the State of North Carolina or of the United States, other than minor traffic violations, during the period of the stay; and
- (z) Defendant paid the costs and fees of this proceeding as assessed by the Secretary within thirty days after the statement of costs and fees was served upon him.

4. Unless Defendant's obligations under this Order are modified by further order of the DHC, Defendant's obligations under this Order end three years from the effective date of the Order provided there are no motions or proceedings pending alleging lack of compliance with the conditions of the stay of the suspension. Pursuant to § .0114(x) of the North Carolina Discipline and Disability Rules, the DHC retains jurisdiction until all conditions of the stay of the suspension have been met. If a motion

or proceeding alleging lack of compliance with the conditions for the stay of the suspension is pending when the period of the stay of the suspension would otherwise have terminated, the DHC retains the jurisdiction and ability to lift the stay of the suspension and activate the three year suspension in whole or in part if it finds that any of the conditions of the stay have not been met. The stay of the suspension and Defendant's obligation to comply with the conditions for the stay will continue until resolution of any such pending motion or proceeding.

5. If during the stay of the suspension Defendant fails to comply with any one or more of the conditions stated above, then the stay of Defendant's suspension may be lifted as provided in § .0114(x) of the North Carolina State Bar Discipline and Disability Rules.

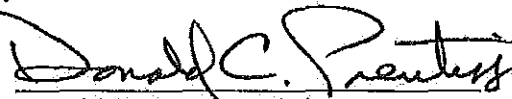
6. If the stay of the suspension is lifted and the suspension is activated for any reason, Defendant may apply for reinstatement after serving the activated suspension by filing a petition, demonstrating compliance with the requirements § .0125 of the North Carolina State Bar Discipline and Disability Rules, any requirements in the order activating the suspension, and the following requirements by clear, cogent, and convincing evidence:

- (a) Defendant submitted his law license and membership card to the Secretary of the State Bar within thirty days of the order lifting the stay and/or activating the suspension of his law license;
- (b) Defendant properly wound down his law practice and complied with the terms of 27 N.C. Admin. Code Chapter 1, Subchapter B, § .0124 of the State Bar Discipline & Disability Rules;
- (c) Defendant completed four hours of continuing legal education in the area of trust account management approved in advance by the Office of Counsel of the State Bar, including at least one continuing legal education course taught by the Trust Account Counsel for the North Carolina State Bar;
- (d) Defendant established procedures by which he personally reconciles his trust accounts or by which he personally supervises any non-attorney assistant who he utilizes to reconcile his trust accounts. Defendant shall submit these procedures to the Office of Counsel 30 days prior to the filing of the petition for reinstatement. Defendant shall have made any adjustments required by the Office of Counsel to ensure compliance with the Rules of Professional Conduct and provided any corrected procedures with the petition;
- (e) Defendant kept the Membership Department of the State Bar informed of his current information for his physical address (not a Post Office box), telephone number, and e-mail address throughout the period of his suspension;

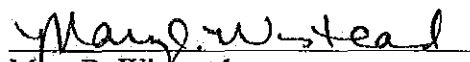
- (f) Defendant accepted all certified mail from the State Bar sent to the address on record with the Membership Department of the North Carolina State Bar throughout the period of the suspension;
- (g) Defendant responded to all letters of notice and requests for information from the North Carolina State Bar by the deadline stated therein with full and complete responses and all requested documentation throughout the period of his suspension;
- (h) Defendant has come into compliance with any outstanding continuing education or membership obligations at the time of the filing of his petition for reinstatement;
- (i) Defendant did not violate any of the Rules of Professional Conduct in effect during the period of the suspension;
- (j) Defendant did not violate any laws of the State of North Carolina or of the United States, other than minor traffic violations, during the period of the suspension; and
- (k) Defendant paid all administrative fees and costs of this proceeding as assessed by the Secretary by the date of the filing of his petition for reinstatement.

8. The Disciplinary Hearing Commission will retain jurisdiction of this matter pursuant to 27 N.C. Admin. Code Chapter 1, Subchapter B, § .0114(x) of the North Carolina State Bar Discipline and Disability Rules until all conditions of the stay are satisfied.


7 Signed by the Chair with the consent of the other hearing panel members, this the day of December 2016.

  
Donald C. Prentiss, Chair  
Disciplinary Hearing Panel

Agreed and consented to by:

  
Mary D. Winstead  
Attorney for Plaintiff

12/5/16  
Date

  
Michael S. Williamson, *pro se*  
Defendant

12-1-16  
Date