

NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

BEFORE THE
GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR
09G0648

IN THE MATTER OF)	
)	
Abigail P. Matre,)	CENSURE
ATTORNEY AT LAW)	
)	

On October 22, 2009, 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.

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.

You are licensed to practice law in South Carolina. You are not licensed to practice law in North Carolina. You advertised your ability to provide legal services in North Carolina on your website, matrelawfirm.com. You registered your law firm as an interstate law firm with the North Carolina State Bar, indicating that North Carolina licensed attorney Lisa Page was a member of your law firm. Yet, there was no mention on your website of Ms. Page providing legal services to residents of North Carolina.

In addition, your website included representations that you specialized in "Charlotte Real Estate" and that you had a "Local Real Estate Specialty".

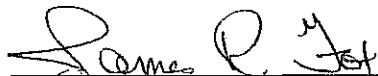
The Grievance Committee found that you held yourself out as being able to provide legal services to residents of North Carolina on your website, when you were not licensed to practice law in North Carolina. Your conduct violated Rule 5.5(a) and (b)(2) of the Rules of Professional Conduct. Furthermore, you could not represent that you specialized in real estate law when you are not a board certified specialist in North Carolina. That representation on your website violated Rule 7.4(b) of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

On June 9, 2009, you advised the Authorized Practice Committee of the North Carolina State Bar that you were revising your website in order to eliminate any misconception as to your "personal ability to practice law in North Carolina." You also told the Authorized Practice Committee that you were in the process of adding Lisa Page's information on your website. As of September 1, 2009, you had not made the changes that you said you were going to make to your website so as to eliminate any misconception that you were able to practice law in North Carolina. The Grievance Committee found that your failure to quickly address the issues in this matter violated Rule 8.4(d) of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

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 January 24, 2008 by the Council of the North Carolina State Bar regarding the taxing of the administrative and investigative costs to any attorney issued a censure by the Grievance Committee, the costs of this action in the amount of \$100.00 are hereby taxed to you.

Done and ordered, this 11th day of November, 2009.



James R. Fox, Chair
Grievance Committee
The North Carolina State Bar