

NORTH CAROLINA  
WAKE COUNTY

BEFORE THE  
GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE  
OF THE  
NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR  
05G0732

IN THE MATTER OF )

Bertram E. Brown, II, )  
ATTORNEY AT LAW )

CENSURE

On April 20, 2006, the Grievance Committee of the North Carolina State Bar met and considered the grievance filed against you by D. D.

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 represented the ex-husband of D. D.'s wife in a lawsuit filed against Forsyth County, and D. D., both individually and in his official capacity as an employee for Forsyth County. You spoke with a reporter for the Winston-Salem Journal about this case. You said you were suing for "several million dollars." You also said that you had a letter from an expert stating that D. D.'s actions were malpractice, and the Forsyth County Department of Social Services was liable for D. D.'s actions. You further stated that D. D.'s behavior had "crossed a well-defined ethical line." Your comments to the press violated Rule 3.6(b), as you talked about matters that were not contained in the public record.

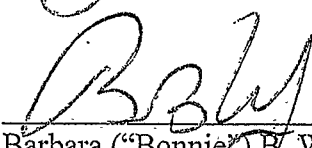
You deposed D. D. during the course of this litigation. During a break at D. D.'s deposition, you and D. D. exchanged words. At the end of the exchange of words, you said to D. D., "You want

some of me?" The Grievance Committee believed that comment was unnecessary, unprofessional, and could have provoked a physical altercation, which fortunately did not occur. The Grievance Committee found your comments to be in violation of Rule 8.4(d) of the Revised 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 October 15, 1981 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 \$50.00 are hereby taxed to you.

Done and ordered, this 5<sup>th</sup> day of Jan, 2006.

  
Barbara ("Bonnie") B. Weyher, Chair  
Grievance Committee  
The North Carolina State Bar