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NORTH CAROLINA
WAKE COUNTY

BEFORE THE
GRIEVANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE
NORTH CAROLINA STATE BAR
01G1135

IN THE MATTER OF)

WILLIAM L. PARKS)
ATTORNEY AT LAW)

REPRIMAND

On April 17, 2002, 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 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 was 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 and I am certain that you will understand fully the spirit in which this duty is performed.

On September 25, 2001, you appeared in a Durham County District Court courtroom that was hearing traffic cases. You were carrying a magazine that had a picture of a UNC football player on the cover. You learned that that football player had just been in the courtroom, and had pled guilty to a traffic offense. You determined that the football player would have been eligible for a city code violation rather than the speeding charge he pled guilty to. Although the football player had left the courtroom, and you had no authority to represent him, you approached the assistant district attorney who was in charge of negotiating traffic offenses. You presented that assistant

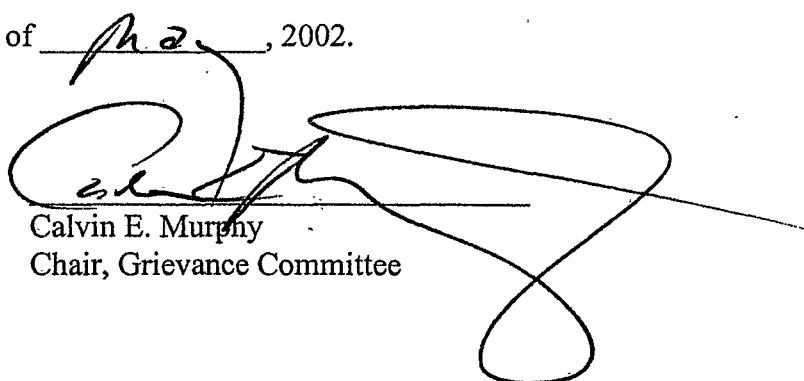
district attorney with a motion for appropriate relief on behalf of the football player. You advised the assistant district attorney that the football player would have been eligible for the city code offense, and asked the assistant district attorney to allow the motion for appropriate relief and consent to the football player pleading guilty to the city code violation rather than the traffic offense. When the assistant district attorney asked you whether the football player was still present, you advised the assistant district attorney that the football player was nervous about being in court, and that you had told him to go home. You represented yourself as being the football player's attorney. The assistant district attorney agreed to the disposition you sought on behalf of the football player. Later that afternoon, you went to UNC's football practice to try to get the football player to sign a waiver of appearance form that you could put in the court's file. An assistant on the UNC football staff advised you that your conduct could jeopardize the UNC football player's eligibility. You were asked to undo what you had done on the football player's behalf. You subsequently had to file a second motion for appropriate relief in the football player's case, asking that the original charge the football player had pled to be reinstated.

Your misrepresentation to the assistant district attorney that you were the attorney for the football player when you had not been approached or employed by the football player violated Rule 8.4(c). Your attempt to assist the football player actually put him in jeopardy of losing his eligibility.

You are hereby Reprimanded by the North Carolina State Bar due to 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 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 Reprimand by the Grievance Committee, the costs of this action in the amount of \$50.00 are hereby taxed to you.

Done and ordered, this 4th day of May, 2002.



Calvin E. Murphy
Chair, Grievance Committee