

**BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF THE  
SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA**

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL	:	No. 152 DB 2014
Petitioner	:	
	:	
v.	:	Attorney Registration No. 43746
	:	
STEVEN M. MEZROW	:	
Respondent	:	(Philadelphia)

**PUBLIC REPRIMAND**

Steven M. Mezrow, you stand before the Disciplinary Board, your professional peers and members of the public for the imposition of a Public Reprimand. It is an unpleasant task to publicly reprimand one who has been granted the privilege of membership in the bar of this Commonwealth. Yet as repugnant as this task may be, it has been deemed necessary that you receive this public discipline. We note that you agreed to a Public Reprimand by a joint petition in support of discipline on consent.

Mr. Mezrow, on or about May 15, 2013, you received the 2013-2014 PA Attorney's Annual Fee Form from the Attorney Registration Office. Sometime after June 26, 2013, you received a postcard reminder from Attorney Registration to complete your fee form. You failed to complete and return the 2013-2014 fee form with annual fee by July 1, 2013, as required by Pa.R.D.E. 219(d). By Order dated September 18, 2013, effective October 18, 2013, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania administratively suspended you from the practice of law.

By letter dated September 18, 2013, sent to you by certified mail from the Attorney Registrar, you were informed of all details of your administrative suspension and your obligations pursuant to Rules 217 and 219, Pa.R.D.E. Enclosed was a copy of

an attorney registration form for you to complete and return by October 18, 2013, the effective date of your administrative suspension. This certified letter was signed for by Victoria Stafford, your law firm's receptionist, on September 20, 2013.

On or about September 20, 2013, Ms. Stafford called you and informed you that you had received this piece of mail from the Attorney Registration Office and that you were on a list of attorneys who were to be administratively suspended. Although you did not personally read and review the September 18, 2013 letter and enclosures, you told Ms. Stafford that you had addressed the matter in August of 2013. In actuality, the matter that you had addressed pertained to your Continuing Legal Education credits and the payment of late fees, not your annual attorney registration for 2013-2014.

After the effective date of the Supreme Court Order, you engaged in the unauthorized practice of law commencing on October 18, 2013 and continuing through October 28, 2013. You continued your employment as an attorney with Pansini & Mezrow and held yourself out as eligible to practice law. On October 18, 2013 and continuing through October 28, 2013, you represented clients in a civil jury matter in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. You failed to notify your clients, the court and opposing counsel of your administrative suspension, and you failed to withdraw your appearance.

On October 28, 2013, Judge Lisa M. Rau, who was assigned to the civil matter, learned that you had been placed on administrative suspension. Judge Rau held a hearing the next day during which she confirmed that you were administratively suspended. By Order dated October 29, 2013, Judge Rau declared a mistrial and directed your law firm to pay the costs incurred by the defense within 60 days of being provided receipts.

On October 29, 2013, you filed the 2013-2014 Fee Form and paid your annual assessment, as well as late payment penalties. You were reinstated to active status on October 29, 2013.

Your conduct in this matter has violated the following Rules of Professional Conduct and Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement:

1. 1.16(a)(1) – Except as stated in paragraph (c), a lawyer shall not represent a client, or where representation has commenced, shall withdraw from the representation of a client if the representation will result in violation of the rules of professional conduct or other law.
2. RPC 5.5(a) – A lawyer shall not practice law in a jurisdiction in violation of the regulation of the legal profession in that jurisdiction, or assist another in doing so.
3. RPC 8.4(d) – it is professional misconduct for a lawyer to engage in conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice.
4. Pa.R.D.E. 203(b)(3) – A willful violation of any other provision of the Enforcement Rules shall be grounds for discipline, *via*:
  - (1) Pa.R.D.E. 217(b) – A formerly admitted attorney shall promptly notify, or cause to be notified, by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, all clients who are involved in pending litigation or administrative proceedings, and the attorney or attorneys for each adverse party in such matter or proceeding, of the disbarment, suspension, administrative suspension or transfer to inactive status and consequent inability of the formerly admitted attorney to act as an attorney after the effective date of the disbarment, suspension, administrative suspension or transfer to inactive status.
  - (2) Pa.R.D.E. 217(c)(1) – A formerly admitted attorney shall promptly notify, or cause to be notified, of the disbarment, suspension, administrative suspension or transfer to inactive status, by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested all persons or their agents or guardians to whom a fiduciary duty

is or may be owed at any time after the disbarment, suspension, administrative suspension or transfer to inactive status.

- (3) Pa.R.D.E. 217(c)(2) – A formerly admitted attorney shall promptly notify, or cause to be notified, of the disbarment, suspension, administrative suspension or transfer to inactive status, by registered or certified mail, return receipt requested all other persons with whom the formerly admitted attorney may at any time expect to have professional contacts under circumstances where there is a reasonable probability that they may infer that he or she continues as an attorney in good standing.
- (4) Pa.R.D.E. 217(j)(3) – A formerly admitted attorney may have direct communication with a client or third party regarding a matter being handled by the attorney, organization or firm for which the formerly admitted attorney works only if the communication is limited to ministerial matters such as scheduling, billing, updates, confirmation of receipt or sending of correspondence and messages. The formerly admitted attorney shall clearly indicate in any such communication that he or she is a legal assistant and identify the supervising attorney.
- (5) Pa.R.D.E. 217(j)(4)(iii) – A formerly admitted attorney is specifically prohibited from performing any law-related services for any client who in the past was represented by the formerly admitted attorney.
- (6) Pa.R.D.E.217(j)(4)(iv) – A formerly admitted attorney is specifically prohibited from representing himself or herself as a lawyer or person of similar status.
- (7) Pa.R.D.E. 217(j)(4)(v) – A formerly admitted attorney is specifically prohibited from having any contact with clients either in person, by telephone, or in writing, except as provided in paragraph (3).
- (8) Pa.R.D.E. 217(j)(4)(vi) – A formerly admitted attorney is specifically prohibited from rendering legal consultation or advice to a client.
- (9) Pa.R.D.E. 217(j)(4)(vii) – A formerly admitted attorney is specifically prohibited from appearing on behalf of a client in any hearing or proceedings or before any judicial officer, arbitrator, mediator, court, public agency, referee, magistrate, hearing officer or any other adjudicative person or body.

We note that that there are mitigating factors in this matter. You self-reported your misconduct to Petitioner, cooperated with Petitioner, admitted engaging in the misconduct, and demonstrated remorse. You have no record of discipline.

Mr. Mezrow, your conduct in this matter is now fully public. This Public Reprimand is a matter of public record.

As you stand before the Board today, we remind you that you have a continuing obligation to abide by the Rules of Professional Conduct and Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement. This Public Reprimand is proof that Pennsylvania lawyers will not be permitted to engage in conduct that falls below professional standards. Be mindful that any future dereliction will subject you to disciplinary action.

This Public Reprimand shall be posted on the Disciplinary Board's website at [www.padisciplinaryboard.org](http://www.padisciplinaryboard.org).

  
Designated Member  
The Disciplinary Board of the  
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

Administered by a designated panel of three Members of The Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, at Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on April 16, 2015.

### **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The undersigned, Respondent in the above proceeding, herewith acknowledges that the above Public Reprimand was administered in his presence and in the presence of the designated panel of The Disciplinary Board at the District I Office of the Disciplinary Board, 16<sup>th</sup> Floor, Seven Penn Center, 1635 Market Street, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on April 16, 2015.



Steven M. Mezrow