

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL, | : | No. 2785 Disciplinary Docket No. 3 |
| Petitioner | : | |
| | : | No. 34 DB 2021 |
| v. | : | |
| | : | Attorney Registration No. 37162 |
| WILLIAM M. CONNOR, | : | |
| Respondent | : | (Philadelphia) |

ORDER

PER CURIAM

AND NOW, this 27th day of April, 2021, upon consideration of the Recommendation of the Three-Member Panel of the Disciplinary Board, the Joint Petition in Support of Discipline on Consent is granted, and William M. Connor is suspended on consent from the Bar of this Commonwealth for a period of one year. The suspension is stayed in its entirety, and Respondent is placed on probation for a period of one year, subject to the following conditions:

1. Respondent shall abstain from using alcohol, drugs, or any other mind-altering chemicals;
2. Respondent shall attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings weekly;
3. Respondent shall obtain an Alcoholics Anonymous sponsor, with whom he maintains weekly contact;
4. A sobriety monitor shall be appointed to monitor Respondent in accordance with Disciplinary Board Rule §89.293(c);
5. Respondent shall furnish his sobriety monitor with his Alcoholics Anonymous sponsor's name, address, and telephone number;
6. Respondent shall establish his weekly attendance at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings by providing written verification to the Disciplinary Board on a Board-approved form;

7. Respondent shall undergo any counseling, out-patient, or in-patient treatment prescribed by a physician, mental healthcare professional, or alcohol counselor;
8. Respondent shall file with the Disciplinary Board Prothonotary quarterly written reports that address his compliance with the conditions of probation;
9. With the sobriety monitor, Respondent shall:
 - a. meet at least twice per month;
 - b. maintain weekly telephone contact;
 - c. provide the necessary properly executed written authorizations to verify his compliance with the required substance abuse treatment; and
 - d. cooperate fully.
10. The appointed sobriety monitor shall:
 - a. monitor Respondent's compliance with the terms and conditions of the order imposing probation;
 - b. assist Respondent in arranging any necessary professional or substance abuse treatment;
 - c. meet with Respondent at least twice a month and maintain weekly telephone contact with Respondent;
 - d. maintain direct monthly contact with the Alcoholics Anonymous sponsor;
 - e. file with the Disciplinary Board Prothonotary quarterly written reports; and
 - f. immediately report to the Disciplinary Board Prothonotary any violations by Respondent of the terms and conditions of the probation.

Respondent shall pay the expenses incurred in the investigation and processing of this matter. See Pa.R.D.E. 208(g).

A True Copy Patricia Nicola
As Of 04/27/2021

Attest: 
Chief Clerk
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

REDACTED

BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF THE
SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL, :
Petitioner :
: ODC File No. C1-20-440
v. :
: Atty. Reg. No. 37162
WILLIAM M. CONNOR, :
Respondent : (Philadelphia)

**JOINT PETITION IN SUPPORT OF DISCIPLINE
ON CONSENT UNDER RULE 215(d), Pa.R.D.E.**

Petitioner, Office of Disciplinary Counsel ("ODC"), by Thomas J. Farrell, Esquire, Chief Disciplinary Counsel, and by Richard Hernandez, Esquire, Disciplinary Counsel, and Respondent, William M. Connor, who is represented by Robert S. Tintner, Esquire, file this Joint Petition In Support of Discipline On Consent Under Rule 215(d) of the Pennsylvania Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement ("the Joint Petition") and respectfully represent that:

1. Petitioner, whose principal office is located at Pennsylvania Judicial Center, Suite 2700, 601 Commonwealth Avenue, P.O. Box 62485, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, is invested, pursuant to Pennsylvania Rule of Disciplinary Enforcement ("Pa.R.D.E.") 207, with the power and duty to investigate all matters involving alleged misconduct of an attorney admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and to prosecute all disciplinary proceedings

FILED
03/18/2021
The Disciplinary Board of the
Supreme Court of Pennsylvania

brought in accordance with the various provisions of said Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement.

2. Respondent, William M. Connor, was born in 1957, was admitted to practice law in the Commonwealth on November 3, 1982, and lists a public access address at 2929 Arch Street, 13th Floor, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19104.

3. Pursuant to Pa.R.D.E. 201(a)(1), Respondent is subject to the disciplinary jurisdiction of the Disciplinary Board of the Supreme Court.

4. Petitioner commenced an investigation of Respondent after Respondent, through counsel, self-reported to Petitioner that between August 2019 and June 2020, Respondent had engaged in the unauthorized practice of law while administratively suspended for failing to satisfy the continuing legal education ("CLE") requirements; this complaint was docketed at No. C1-20-440.

5. Respondent has agreed to enter into a joint recommendation for consent discipline that encompasses the allegations of misconduct raised in the open complaint file.

SPECIFIC FACTUAL ADMISSIONS
AND ETHICS RULES VIOLATED

6. Respondent stipulates that the factual allegations set forth below are true and correct and that he violated the

Rules of Professional Conduct and Pennsylvania Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement as set forth herein.

CHARGE

7. The Pennsylvania Continuing Legal Education Board ("the CLE Board") assigned Respondent to Compliance Group 3.

a. Attorneys assigned to Compliance Group 3 have a deadline of December 31st to comply with the Pennsylvania Continuing Legal Education ("CLE") requirements.

8. Attorney Registration records show that from July 1, 2018 through July 31, 2019, Respondent listed his mailing address as follows: Christie & Young PC, 1880 John F. Kennedy Blvd, 10th Floor, Philadelphia, PA 19103-7428 ("the JFK Blvd address").

9. By notice dated September 28, 2018, mailed to Respondent at the JFK Blvd address, the CLE Board, *inter alia*:

a. enclosed Respondent's Preliminary Annual CLE Report, which showed Respondent's CLE credit hours as of September 19, 2018;

b. stated that the CLE Board's records showed that Respondent was non-compliant with his CLE requirements;

- c. informed Respondent that if he did not satisfy his CLE requirements by his compliance deadline, he would be considered non-compliant and assessed a late fee of \$100; and
- d. offered to assist Respondent in achieving compliance.

10. Respondent received the September 28, 2018 notice, with enclosure.

11. By notice dated February 22, 2019, mailed to Respondent at the JFK Blvd address, the CLE Board, *inter alia*:

- a. enclosed Respondent's Annual CLE Report, which showed Respondent's CLE credit hours as of December 31, 2018;
- b. stated that the CLE Board's records showed that Respondent was non-compliant with his CLE requirements;
- c. informed Respondent that a late fee of \$100 had been assessed;
- d. advised Respondent that he had sixty days from the date of the notice to complete his CLE requirements and to pay any outstanding fees which had been assessed; and

e. informed Respondent that if he did not complete his CLE requirements and pay the outstanding fees, he would be assessed a second \$100 late fee and his name would be included on a non-compliant report sent to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania.

12. Respondent received the February 22, 2019 notice, with enclosures.

13. By notice dated May 29, 2019, mailed to Respondent at the JFK Blvd address, the CLE Board, *inter alia*:

- a. notified Respondent that he was non-compliant with his CLE requirements due on December 31, 2018;
- b. informed Respondent that a second late fee of \$100 had been assessed;
- c. advised Respondent that the failure to complete his CLE requirements and pay any outstanding late fees by 4:00 p.m. on June 28, 2019, would result in his name being included on a non-compliant report sent to the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania;
- d. stated that based on the non-compliant report, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania would issue

an Order administratively suspending his license to practice law and a third \$100 late fee would be assessed; and

- e. informed Respondent of the consequences that would follow if he failed to address his non-compliance, as well as those steps he had to take to resume active status.

14. Respondent received the May 29, 2019 notice, with enclosure.

15. By Order dated July 17, 2019, the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania placed Respondent on administrative suspension pursuant to Rule 111(b) of the Pennsylvania Rules for Continuing Legal Education ("Pa.C.L.E.") for failure to comply with the CLE requirements.

16. By letter dated July 17, 2019, sent to Respondent by certified mail, return receipt requested, at the JFK Blvd address, Suzanne E. Price, Attorney Registrar:

- a. enclosed a copy of July 17, 2019 Order and the page containing Respondent's name;
- b. informed Respondent that the effective date of his administrative suspension was August 16, 2019, and that he was required to comply with the Pennsylvania Rules for Continuing Legal

Education, Pa.R.D.E. 217, and §§91.91-91.99 of the Disciplinary Board Rules, and the web address Respondent could use to access those rules;

- c. advised Respondent that he could avoid being administratively suspended if he satisfied his outstanding obligation to the CLE Board; and
- d. enclosed a letter from the CLE Board providing information regarding compliance.

17. Respondent's agent signed for this letter on July 26, 2019.

18. Respondent received Ms. Price's July 17, 2019 letter, with enclosures.

19. Respondent knew that he was administratively suspended.

20. Respondent violated Pa.R.D.E. 217(e)(1), in that he did not timely file a verified Statement of Compliance (Form DB-25(a)) with the Disciplinary Board within ten days after the effective date of his administrative suspension.

21. Sometime before August 5, 2019, Respondent ceased his employment at Christie & Young, PC.

22. On August 5, 2019, Respondent joined Reger Rizzo & Darnall LLP ("the Reger firm"), as a partner in the Reger firm's Philadelphia office.

23. From August 5, 2019, through June 4, 2020, Respondent was employed as a partner at the Reger firm.

24. On June 5, 2020, Respondent ceased working at the Reger firm and went on medical leave.

25. From August 16, 2019 (the effective date of the July 17, 2019 Order administratively suspending Respondent) through June 4, 2020, Respondent continued to hold himself out to the public as a lawyer eligible to practice law in Pennsylvania by:

- a. appearing on the Reger firm's website as a partner at the Reger firm;
- b. using business cards that identified Respondent as a partner at the Reger firm; and
- c. representing himself to others as a lawyer eligible to practice law in Pennsylvania.

26. From August 16, 2019 through June 4, 2020, Respondent engaged in the unauthorized practice of law in that he:

- a. communicated with the client by providing status reports, participated in the litigation

strategy (but did not file any pleadings or appear at court hearings), and remained a counsel of record until June 2020, with respect to a civil case filed in the Court of Common Pleas for Philadelphia County, said case captioned *Petrowski et al. v. Public Sports Bar, LLC, et al.*, docket number 180603102;

- b. communicated with the client about the civil case and remained a counsel of record until June 2020, in connection with a civil case filed in the Court of Common Pleas for Allegheny County, said case captioned *Patrick Loyacona and Sharon Loyacona v. Hydro Carbide, Inc., et al.*, docket number GD-12-011211;
- c. communicated with the client about strategy and status (but did not file any pleadings or appear at court hearings) and remained a counsel of record until June 2020, for a civil case filed in the New York Supreme Court for Westchester County, said case captioned *Penelope L. Ward v. BDN Associates, Inc., et al.*, index number 51255/2018;

- d. communicated with the client about strategy and status (but did not file any pleadings or appear at court hearings) for a civil case filed in the New York Supreme Court for New York County, said case captioned *Jennifer Caron v. 202 W.49th Pub Inc. d/b/a Playwright Restaurant & Tavern, et al.*, index number 157285/2018;
 - e. consulted with a married couple regarding Pennsylvania insurance coverage issues for a non-litigation matter; and
 - f. consulted with an individual concerning the strategy for pursuing in Pennsylvania a claim for commission compensation for a non-litigation matter.
27. Respondent failed to advise his clients that:
- a. he had been administratively suspended; and
 - b. he could not represent them in their legal matters.
28. Respondent failed to:
- a. advise opposing counsel and the courts that he had been administratively suspended; and

- b. withdraw his appearance immediately after he was administratively suspended.

29. By his conduct as alleged in paragraphs 7 through 28 above, Respondent violated the following Rules of Professional Conduct and Pennsylvania Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement:

- a. RPC 5.5(a), which states that 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;
- b. RPC 7.1, which states that a lawyer shall not make a false or misleading communication about the lawyer or the lawyer's services. A communication is false or misleading if it contains a material misrepresentation of fact or law, or omits a fact necessary to make the statement considered as a whole not materially misleading; and
- c. RPC 8.4(d), which states that it is professional misconduct for a lawyer to engage in conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice; and

d. Pa.R.D.E. 203(b)(3), which states that a wilful violation of any other provision of the Enforcement Rules shall be grounds for discipline, *via*:

- (1) Pa.R.D.E. 217(a), which states that a formerly admitted attorney shall promptly notify, or cause to be promptly notified, all clients being represented in pending matters, other than litigation or administrative proceedings, of the disbarment, suspension, administrative suspension or transfer to inactive status and the 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 and shall advise said clients to seek legal advice elsewhere. The notice required by this subdivision (a) may be delivered by the most efficient method possible as long as the chosen method is successful and provides proof of receipt. At the time of the filing of the verified statement of compliance required by subdivision (e)(1) of this Rule, the formerly admitted attorney shall file copies of the notices required by this subdivision and proofs of receipt with the Board and shall serve a conforming copy on Disciplinary Counsel;
- (2) Pa.R.D.E. 217(b), which states that a formerly admitted attorney shall promptly notify, or cause to be promptly notified, 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. The notice to be given to the client shall advise the prompt substitution of another attorney or attorneys in place of the formerly admitted attorney. In the event the client does not obtain substitute counsel before the effective date of the disbarment, suspension, administrative suspension or transfer to inactive status, it shall be the responsibility of the formerly admitted attorney to move in the court or agency in which the proceeding is pending for leave to withdraw. The notice to be given to the attorney or attorneys for an adverse party shall state the place of residence of the client of the formerly admitted attorney. The notice required by this subdivision (b) may be delivered by the most efficient method possible as long as the chosen method is successful and provides proof of receipt. See Note after subdivision (a), *supra*. At the time of the filing of the verified statement of compliance required by subdivision (e)(1) of this Rule, the formerly admitted attorney shall file copies of the notices required by this subdivision and proofs of receipt with the Board and shall serve a conforming copy on Disciplinary Counsel;

- (3) Pa.R.D.E. 217(c)(2), which states that a formerly admitted attorney shall promptly notify, or cause to be promptly notified, of the disbarment, suspension, administrative suspension or transfer to inactive status 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. The notice required by this subdivision (c) may be delivered by the most efficient method possible as long as the chosen method is successful and provides proof of receipt. See Note after subdivision (a), *supra*. At the time of the filing of the verified statement of compliance required by subdivision (e)(1) of this Rule, the formerly admitted attorney shall file copies of the notices required by this subdivision and proofs of receipt with the Board and shall serve a conforming copy on Disciplinary Counsel. The responsibility of the formerly admitted attorney to provide the notice required by this subdivision shall continue for as long as the formerly attorney is disbarred, suspended, administratively suspended or on inactive status;

- (4) Pa.R.D.E. 217(d)(2), which states that in addition to the steps that a formerly admitted attorney must promptly take under other provisions of this Rule to disengage from the practice of law, a formerly admitted attorney shall promptly cease and desist from using all forms of communication that expressly or implicitly convey eligibility to practice law in the state courts of Pennsylvania, including but not limited to professional titles, letterhead, business cards, signage, websites, and references to admission to the Pennsylvania Bar;
- (5) Pa.R.D.E. 217(e)(1), which states that within ten days after the effective date of the disbarment, suspension, administrative suspension or transfer to inactive status order, the formerly

admitted attorney shall file with the Board a verified statement and serve a copy on Disciplinary Counsel;

- (6) Pa.R.D.E. 217(j)(2), which states that for purposes of this subdivision (j), the only law-related activities that may be conducted by a formerly admitted attorney are the following: (i) legal work of a preparatory nature, such as legal research, assembly of data and other necessary information, and drafting of transactional documents, pleadings, briefs, and other similar documents; (ii) direct communication with the client or third parties to the extent permitted by paragraph (3); and (iii) accompanying a member in good standing of the Bar of this Commonwealth to a deposition or other discovery matter or to a meeting regarding a matter that is not currently in litigation, for the limited purpose of providing clerical assistance to the member in good standing who appears as the representative of the client;
- (7) Pa.R.D.E. 217(j)(3), which states that 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;
- (8) Pa.R.D.E. 217(j)(4)(iv), which states that a formerly admitted attorney is specifically prohibited from

representing himself or herself as a lawyer or person of similar status;

(9) Pa.R.D.E. 217(j)(4)(v), which states that 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); and

(10) Pa.R.D.E. 217(j)(4)(vi), which states that a formerly admitted attorney is specifically prohibited from rendering legal consultation or advice to a client.

SPECIFIC JOINT RECOMMENDATION FOR DISCIPLINE

30. Petitioner and Respondent jointly recommend that the appropriate discipline for Respondent's admitted misconduct is for Respondent to be suspended for one year, to stay the suspension in its entirety, and to be placed on probation for one year, subject to the following conditions:

- a. Respondent shall abstain from using alcohol or any other mind-altering chemicals.
- b. Respondent shall attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings on at least a weekly basis.
- c. Respondent shall obtain a sponsor in Alcoholics Anonymous and maintain weekly contact with that sponsor.

- d. A sobriety monitor shall be appointed to monitor Respondent in accordance with Disciplinary Board Rule § 89.293(c).
- e. Respondent shall furnish his sobriety monitor with his Alcoholics Anonymous sponsor's name, address and telephone number.
- f. Respondent shall establish his weekly attendance at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings by providing written verification to the Disciplinary Board on a Disciplinary Board-approved form.
- g. Respondent shall undergo any counseling, out-patient or in-patient treatment prescribed by a mental healthcare professional or alcohol counselor.
- h. Respondent shall file with the Disciplinary Board Prothonotary quarterly written reports that address his compliance with the conditions of probation.
- i. With the sobriety monitor, Respondent shall:
 - 1) meet at least twice a month;
 - 2) maintain weekly telephone contact;

- 3) provide the necessary properly executed written authorizations to verify his compliance with the required substance abuse treatment; and
 - 4) cooperate fully.
- j. The appointed sobriety monitor shall:
- 1) monitor Respondent's compliance with the terms and conditions of the order imposing probation;
 - 2) assist Respondent in arranging any necessary professional or substance abuse treatment;
 - 3) meet with Respondent at least twice a month, and maintain weekly telephone contact with him;
 - 4) maintain direct monthly contact with the Alcoholics Anonymous sponsor;
 - 5) file with the Disciplinary Board Prothonotary quarterly written reports; and
 - 6) immediately report to the Disciplinary Board Prothonotary any violations by the

Respondent of the terms and conditions of
the probation.

31. Respondent hereby consents to that discipline being imposed upon him by the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania. Attached to this Petition is Respondent's executed Affidavit required by Pa.R.D.E. 215(d), stating that he consents to the recommended discipline, including the mandatory acknowledgements contained in Pa.R.D.E. 215(d)(1) through (4).

32. In support of Petitioner and Respondent's joint recommendation, it is respectfully submitted that there are several mitigating circumstances:

- a. Attached collectively as Attachment A are two letters prepared by Dr. David Steinman, a psychiatrist. In the first letter dated September 29, 2020, Dr. Steinman stated that from July 2019 through September 2020, he has been treating Respondent for major depression and severe alcohol use disorder. In the second letter dated January 26, 2021, Dr. Steinman stated that he has been treating Respondent for severe alcoholism since July 2019, and that Respondent's condition impacted

his ability to satisfy the CLE requirements and impaired his judgment to a degree that Respondent continued to practice law after he was administratively suspended.

b. Attached as Attachment B is a letter dated October 17, 2020, prepared by Mr. Timothy Brooks, the Executive Director and Owner of Synergy Houses (sober living residential treatment facilities). In the letter, Mr. Brooks stated that Respondent has been a resident of Synergy Houses since July 30, 2020, that Respondent has participated fully in the course of treatment offered by Synergy Houses, and that Respondent has demonstrated compliance with the treatment regimen.

c. Attached as Attachment C is a letter dated December 30, 2020, prepared by Ms. Jillian Jackson Williams, Clinical Director for Supreme Wellness Recovery, which offers outpatient treatment programs to support individuals in maintaining their sobriety. In the letter, Ms. Williams stated that Respondent has been sober since June 2020,

that he was admitted to an intensive outpatient program on November 23, 2020, that Respondent "has demonstrated a commitment to his recovery and wellness for approximately six months," and that Respondent will be transitioning to a general outpatient program sometime in early January, with the aim of returning to work.

- d. Respondent and Petitioner submit that it is likely that at a disciplinary hearing Respondent would establish that his judgment was impaired during the period that he failed to timely satisfy his CLE requirements and that he engaged in the unauthorized practice while administratively suspended and, consequently, there is a causal connection between his misconduct and his diagnosed conditions so as to constitute mitigation under *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Braun*, 553 A.2d 894 (Pa. 1989).
- e. Respondent has admitted engaging in misconduct and violating the charged Rules of

Professional Conduct and Pennsylvania Rules of Disciplinary Enforcement.

- f. Respondent has cooperated with Petitioner, as is evidenced by Respondent's admissions herein and his consent to being sanctioned.
- g. Respondent is remorseful for his misconduct and understands he should be disciplined.
- h. Respondent has no record of discipline in over 38 years of practicing law in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- i. Respondent self-reported his misconduct to Petitioner.

33. In *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Timothy Shawn Gordon*, No. 197 DB 2009 (S.Ct. Order 8/11/11) (D.Bd. Rpt. 3/31/11), Respondent Gordon engaged in the unauthorized practice of law and the sanction imposed was a suspension of one year, stayed in its entirety, and probation for a one-year period with conditions; *Gordon* resembles Respondent Connor's disciplinary matter and supports the sanction recommendation in the Joint Petition.

Effective December 12, 2008, Respondent Gordon was placed on inactive status because he failed to show compliance with Pennsylvania's CLE requirements. D.Bd. Rpt. 3-4, 9.

Respondent Gordon was reinstated to active status on August 27, 2009. *Id.* at 5. During the period that Respondent Gordon was on inactive status (approximately eight and one-half months), he engaged in the unauthorized practice of law by taking on new client engagements, providing legal services (including in some instances the filing of motions and pleadings) in at least 15 Pennsylvania state court matters, and appearing in court in five Pennsylvania state court matters. *Id.* at 4-5, 9. At the disciplinary hearing, Respondent Gordon presented evidence establishing that when he engaged in the misconduct, he was suffering from major depressive disorder and alcohol abuse, that he was successfully treating his conditions, and that he was compliant with his treatment regimen. *Id.* at 5-6.

In arriving at the recommended sanction of a one-year suspension, stayed in its entirety, with a one-year period of probation with conditions, the Disciplinary Board considered that: Respondent Gordon had several mitigating factors, including **Braun** mitigation, no record of discipline since his admission in 1988, and expression of remorse; and Respondent Gordon's unauthorized practice of law was only eight and one-half months, which was shorter than other attorneys who engaged in similar misconduct. *Id.* at 10-11. The Disciplinary

Board stated that the sanction recommendation "reflects the seriousness of Respondent's unauthorized practice of law, yet allows for mitigation related to the specific circumstances of this matter." *Id.* at 11.

Respondent Connor's matter resembles Respondent Gordon's matter in that both: engaged in the unauthorized practice of law for several months (although the period of Respondent Connor's misconduct was ten months, slightly longer than Respondent Gordon's eight and one-half months); and presented as mitigating factors **Braun** mitigation, no record of discipline, and remorse.

There are two factual distinctions in Respondent Gordon's matter and the within matter that favor Respondent Connor in deciding whether to grant the Joint Petition: Respondent Connor's unauthorized practice of law did not involve the filing of pleadings or appearing in court; and Respondent Connor self-reported his misconduct to ODC.

Petitioner and Respondent's joint recommendation for Respondent to be suspended for one year, to stay the suspension in its entirety, and to be placed on probation for one year with conditions, accounts for relevant precedent, acknowledges the link between Respondent's misconduct and his

mental health conditions, and ensures that Respondent continues to commit to his treatment regimen.

Petitioner and Respondent's joint recommendation advances the goals of attorney discipline. Those goals are protecting the public, maintaining the integrity of the courts and the legal profession, and specific and general deterrence. See *Office of Disciplinary Counsel v. Keller*, 506 A.2d 872, 875 (Pa. 1986); *In re Iulo*, 766 A.2d 335, 338-339 (Pa. 2001).

WHEREFORE, Petitioner and Respondent respectfully request that:

1. Pursuant to Rule 215(e) and 215(g), Pa.R.D.E., the Three-Member Panel of the Disciplinary Board review and approve the above Joint Petition In Support Of Discipline On Consent and file its recommendation with the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania in which it is recommended that the Supreme Court enter an Order that Respondent receive a one-year suspension, to be stayed in its entirety, and that he be placed on probation for one year, subject to the following conditions:

- a. Respondent shall abstain from using alcohol or any other mind-altering chemicals.
- b. Respondent shall attend Alcoholics Anonymous meetings on at least a weekly basis.
- c. Respondent shall obtain a sponsor in Alcoholics Anonymous and maintain weekly contact with that sponsor.
- d. A sobriety monitor shall be appointed to monitor Respondent in accordance with Disciplinary Board Rule § 89.293(c).
- e. Respondent shall furnish his sobriety monitor with his Alcoholics Anonymous sponsor's name, address and telephone number.
- f. Respondent shall establish his weekly attendance at Alcoholics Anonymous meetings by providing written verification to the Disciplinary Board on a Disciplinary Board-approved form.
- g. Respondent shall undergo any counseling, out-patient or in-patient treatment

prescribed by a mental healthcare professional or alcohol counselor.

- h. Respondent shall file with the Disciplinary Board Prothonotary quarterly written reports that address his compliance with the conditions of probation.
- i. With the sobriety monitor, Respondent shall:
 - 1) meet at least twice a month;
 - 2) maintain weekly telephone contact;
 - 3) provide the necessary properly executed written authorizations to verify his compliance with the required substance abuse treatment; and
 - 4) cooperate fully.
- j. The appointed sobriety monitor shall:
 - 1) monitor Respondent's compliance with the terms and conditions of the order imposing probation;
 - 2) assist Respondent in arranging any necessary professional or substance abuse treatment;

3) meet with Respondent at least twice a month, and maintain weekly telephone contact with him;

4) maintain direct monthly contact with the Alcoholics Anonymous sponsor;

5) file with the Disciplinary Board Prothonotary quarterly written reports; and

6) immediately report to the Disciplinary Board Prothonotary any violations by the Respondent of the terms and conditions of the probation; and

2. Pursuant to Pa.R.D.E. 215(i), the Three-Member Panel of the Disciplinary Board enter an order for Respondent to pay the necessary expenses incurred in the investigation and prosecution of this matter, and that under Pa.R.D.E. 208(g)(1) all expenses be paid by Respondent within 30 days after the notice of the taxed expenses is sent to Respondent.

Respectfully and jointly submitted,

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL

THOMAS J. FARRELL
CHIEF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL

MARCH 16, 2021
Date

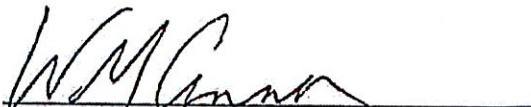
By



Richard Hernandez
Disciplinary Counsel

3/12/21
Date

By



William M. Connor
Respondent

3/12/21
Date

By



Robert S. Tintner, Esquire
Respondent's Counsel

ATTACHMENT A
UNAVAILABLE -
CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT

ATTACHMENT B
UNAVAILABLE -
CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT

ATTACHMENT C
UNAVAILABLE -
CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT

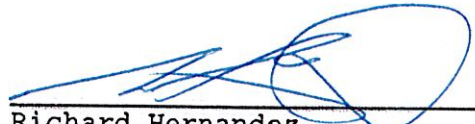
BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD OF THE
SUPREME COURT OF PENNSYLVANIA

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL, :
Petitioner :
: ODC File No. C1-20-440
v. :
: Atty. Reg. No. 37162
WILLIAM M. CONNOR, :
Respondent : (Philadelphia)

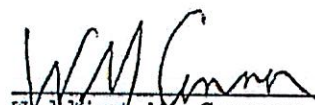
VERIFICATION

The statements contained in the foregoing Joint Petition
In Support Of Discipline On Consent Under Pa.R.D.E. 215(d)
are true and correct to the best of our knowledge or
information and belief and are made subject to the penalties
of 18 Pa.C.S. § 4904, relating to unsworn falsification to
authorities.


March 18, 2021
Date


Richard Hernandez
Disciplinary Counsel

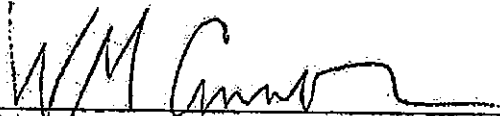
3/12/21
Date


William M. Connor, Esquire
Respondent

3/17/21
Date

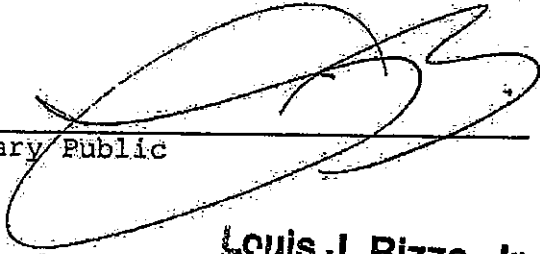

Robert S. Tintner, Esquire
Counsel for Respondent

4. He consents because he knows that if charges predicated upon the matter under investigation were filed, he could not successfully defend against them.



William M. Connor
Respondent

Sworn to and subscribed
before me this 12th
day of MARCH, 2021.



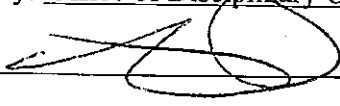
Notary Public

Louis J. Rizzo, Jr.
Attorney at Law
29 Del.C. §4322 (a)(3)
Notarial Officer

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

I certify that this filing complies with the provisions of the *Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania: Case Records of the Appellate and Trial Courts* that require filing confidential information and documents differently than non-confidential information and documents.

Submitted by: Office of Disciplinary Counsel

Signature:  _____

Name: Richard Hernandez, Disciplinary Counsel

Attorney No. (if applicable): 57254