

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

OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL	:	No. 101 DB 2015
Petitioner	:	
	:	File No. C2-11-1043
v.	:	
	:	Attorney Registration No. 69873
STEPHANI LEWIS	:	
Respondent	:	(Chester County)

PUBLIC REPRIMAND

Stephani Lewis, 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.

Ms. Lewis, from July 2009 through September 21, 2011, you were the Associate General Counsel to the AFA-CWA, a national labor organization. In September 2010, you initiated administrative proceedings and the pursuit of claims against the AFA-CWA and its parent organization, the CWA, in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

You asserted claims of unlawful conduct on the part of your employer-client. You did so, at least in part, based upon information you obtained from an executive assistant in the legal department who oversaw the budget. Upon your receipt of such information and/or suspicions of wrongdoing, you were required by RPC 1.3 to “act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing [your] client.” Such diligence required that you reasonably consult with your client about the means by

which the client's objectives were to be accomplished and explain the issue to the extent reasonably necessary to permit your client to make informed decisions regarding the representations. You did not communicate with your client in pursuit of its interests when you reportedly obtained information upon which you asserted unlawful activity of persons within the AFA-CWA which were imputable to the organization.

You took no steps to refer the issues claimed to higher authorities within the organization to redress the alleged unlawful activity. Instead, you acted in immediate pursuit of your own personal interests by asserting claims directly adverse to your client and actively taking steps to publicize those claims for the purpose of leveraging a settlement.

Your methods of redressing your personal interests placed you in conflict with your employer-client. Instead of abiding by your obligations to the organization and treading carefully in light of your professional obligations to your employer-client, you chose an aggressive and public path with little regard for your ethical obligations. You not only sued your employer-client before making any effort to substantiate and address the allegedly unlawful accounting practices, you started a public campaign against your employer-client while you remained in your position as Associate General Counsel.

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

1. RPC 1.3 – A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.
2. RPC 1.4(a)(2) – A lawyer shall reasonably consult with the client about the means by which the client's objectives are to be accomplished.

3. RPC 1.4(b) – A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation.
4. RPC 1.13(b) – If a lawyer for an organization knows that an officer, employee or other person associated with the organization is engaged in action, intends to act or refuses to act in a matter related to the organization that is a violation of a legal obligation to the organization, or a violation of law which reasonably might be imputed to the organization, and is likely to result in substantial injury to the organization, the lawyer shall proceed as is reasonably necessary in the best interest of the organization. In determining how to proceed, the lawyer shall give due consideration to the seriousness of the violation and its consequences, the scope and nature of the lawyer's representation, the responsibility in the organization and the apparent motivation of the person involved, the policies of the organization concerning such matters and any other relevant considerations. Any measures taken shall be designed to minimize disruption of the organization and the risk of revealing information relating to the representation to persons outside the organization. Such measures may include among others:
 - (1) Asking for reconsideration of the matter;
 - (2) Advising that a separate legal opinion on the matter be sought for presentation to appropriate authority in the organization; and

(3) Referring the matter to higher authority in the organization, including, if warranted by the seriousness of the matter, referral to the highest authority that can act on behalf of the organization as determined by applicable law.

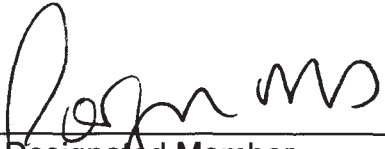
5. RPC 1.7(a)(2) – A lawyer shall not represent a client if the representation involves a concurrent conflict of interest. A concurrent conflict of interest exists if there is significant risk that the representation of one or more clients will be materially limited by the lawyer’s responsibilities to another client, a former client or a third person or by a personal interest of the lawyer.

We note that you have been admitted since 1994 and have never been the subject of professional discipline in any other matters.

Ms. Lewis, 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.




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 Trooper, Pennsylvania, on April 13, 2016.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The undersigned, Respondent in the above proceeding, herewith acknowledges that the above Public Reprimand was administered in her presence and in the presence of the designated panel of The Disciplinary Board at 820 Adams Avenue, Suite 179, Trooper, Pennsylvania, on April 13, 2016.



Stephani Lewis