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October 25, 2021

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL, REGULAR MAIL, & ELECTRONIC MAIL

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Re: In the Matter of William N. Gonzalez
Docket No. DRB 21-146
District Docket No. XIV-2019-0542E
LETTER OF ADMONITION

Dear Mr. Gonzalez:

The Disciplinary Review Board has reviewed your conduct in the above matter and has concluded that it was improper. Following a review of the record, the Board determined to impose an admonition for your violation of RPC 1.15(a) (three instances – negligent misappropriation of client trust funds) and RPC 1.15(d) (failure to comply with the recordkeeping requirements of R. 1:21-6). In your amended verified answer, you admitted the allegations of the complaint.

Specifically, on September 2, 2020, the Office of Attorney Ethics performed a demand audit of your financial records, which revealed multiple recordkeeping deficiencies, in violation of RPC 1.15(d). These deficiencies included your failure to maintain monthly, three-way reconciliations of your attorney trust account (ATA); failure to maintain client ledger cards with debit balances; failure to maintain active account balances in your ATA; and the improper issuance of ATA checks payable to “cash.”

Your recordkeeping deficiencies also resulted in the repeated negligent misappropriation of client funds, in violation of RPC 1.15(a). In particular, in the Gomez matter, you deposited a \$12,500 settlement check in your attorney business account, rather

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than your ATA. You then mistakenly disbursed this settlement via four ATA checks. Consequently, when the four Gomez settlement checks posted to your ATA, funds belonging to unrelated client matters were invaded. In the Lopez-Ixcaco matter, you deposited a \$27,500 settlement check in your ATA. When you disbursed that settlement, you exceeded the settlement proceeds by \$416.75, thereby again invading trust funds held in unrelated client matters. Finally, you issued an ATA check, in the amount of \$1,400, payable to "cash," causing a third invasion of client funds. These three negligent misappropriations occurred because of your failure to conduct monthly three-way reconciliations of your ATA.

In imposing only an admonition, the Board considered, in mitigation, that your misconduct was not committed for financial gain; you readily admitted your misconduct; you have an unblemished disciplinary record of more than thirty years; and you rectified the recordkeeping deficiencies noted above.

Your conduct has adversely reflected not only on you as an attorney but also on all members of the bar. Accordingly, the Board has directed the issuance of this admonition to you. R. 1:20-15(f)(4).

A permanent record of this occurrence has been filed with the Clerk of the Supreme Court and the Board's office. Should you become the subject of any further discipline, this admonition will be taken into consideration.

The Board also has directed that the costs of the disciplinary proceedings be assessed against you. An invoice of costs will be forwarded to you under separate cover.

Very truly yours,



Johanna Barba Jones
Chief Counsel

JBj/jm

c: Chief Justice Stuart Rabner
Associate Justices
Heather Joy Baker, Clerk
Supreme Court of New Jersey
Anne C. Singer, Acting Chair/Vice-Chair
Disciplinary Review Board (e-mail)
Gail G. Haney, Deputy Clerk
Supreme Court of New Jersey (w/ethics history)
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