

SUPREME COURT OF NEW JERSEY
D-79 September Term 2021
086802

In the Matter of
Michele S. Austin,
An Attorney At Law
(Attorney No. 039382008)

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O R D E R

FILED

OCT 27 2022

Heather J. Salen
CLERK

The Disciplinary Review Board having filed with the Court its decision in DRB 21-191, concluding on the record certified to the Board pursuant to Rule 1:20-4 (f) (default by respondent), that **Michele S. Austin**, formerly of **Hackensack**, who was admitted to the bar of this State in 2009, and who has been suspended from the practice of law since March 11, 2021, should be suspended from practice for a period of one year for respondent's violation of RPC 1.1 (a) (gross neglect), RPC 1.3 (lack of diligence), RPC 1.4 (b) (failure to keep client reasonably informed about the status of a matter), RPC 1.15 (b) (failure to promptly deliver to the client funds the client is entitled to receive), RPC 1.16 (d) (failure to protect the client's interests on termination of the representation and to refund the unearned portion of the fee), RPC 5.5 (a) (1) (unauthorized practice of law), RPC 8.1 (a) (false statement of material fact in

a disciplinary matter), and RPC 8.1 (d) (failure to cooperate with disciplinary authorities);

And the Disciplinary Review Board having determined that respondent should be required to refund the sum of \$3,000 to her client in the Jakubiec matter;

And good cause appearing;

It is ORDERED that **Michele S. Austin** is suspended from the practice of law for a period of six months, effective immediately, pending her compliance with the terms of this Order and the Orders of the Court filed March 11, 2021, and April 22, 2021, and until the further Order of the Court; and it is further

ORDERED that **Michele S. Austin** refund the sum of \$3,000 to her client in the Jakubiec matter within sixty days after the filing date of this Order; and it is further

ORDERED that respondent comply with Rule 1:20-20 dealing with suspended attorneys; and it is further

ORDERED that pursuant to Rule 1:20-20(c), respondent's failure to comply with the Affidavit of Compliance requirement of Rule 1:20-20(b)(15) may (1) preclude the Disciplinary Review Board from considering respondent's petition for reinstatement for a period of up to six months from

the date respondent files proof of compliance; (2) be found to constitute a violation of RPC 8.1(b) and RPC 8.4(d); and (3) provide a basis for an action for contempt pursuant to Rule 1:10-2; and it is further

ORDERED that the entire record of this matter be made a permanent part of respondent's file as an attorney at law of this State; and it is further

ORDERED that respondent reimburse the Disciplinary Oversight Committee for appropriate administrative costs and actual expenses incurred in the prosecution of this matter, as provided in Rule 1:20-17.

WITNESS, the Honorable Stuart Rabner, Chief Justice, at Trenton, this 19th day of October, 2022.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Heather J. Baker".

CLERK OF THE SUPREME COURT