

**OFFICE OF
LAWYERS PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

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MEMORANDUM

TO: See Distribution Below

FROM: Susan M. Humiston
Director

DATE: November 28, 2022

RE: News Release - In Re Petition for Disciplinary Action
against S. STEVEN PRINCE, a Minnesota Attorney,
Registration No. 0287696.

Enclosed is a copy of a news release concerning the above matter. Attached to the news release is a copy of a lawyer disciplinary decision issued by the Minnesota Supreme Court.

ljj
Enclosures
cc: S. Steven Prince

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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
November 28, 2022

Contact: Susan M. Humiston, Director
(651) 296-3952

ATTORNEY DISCIPLINED

ST. PAUL -- The Minnesota Supreme Court recently suspended attorney S. Steven Prince of Minneapolis. The discipline was imposed after the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility filed a petition for disciplinary action against Prince. A copy of the Court's decision is attached.

-END-

STATE OF MINNESOTA
IN SUPREME COURT
A22-1216



In re Petition for Disciplinary Action against
S. Steven Prince, a Minnesota Attorney,
Registration No. 0287696.

ORDER

The Director of the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility has filed a petition for disciplinary action alleging that respondent S. Steven Prince has committed professional misconduct warranting public discipline. In one client matter, respondent failed to deposit an advance fee into trust, effectively abandoned the representation, failed to communicate with clients, failed to timely refund unearned fees upon request, and failed to timely return the clients' file. *See* Minn. R. Prof. Conduct 1.3, 1.4(a)(3)–(4), 1.4(b), 1.5(b)(3), 1.15(a), 1.15(c)(4)–(5), 1.16(d). Respondent engaged in the unauthorized practice of law for more than 3 months while suspended for not complying with continuing legal education requirements. *See* Minn. R. Prof. Conduct 3.4(c), 5.5(a)–(b), 8.4(d). In a second client matter, respondent did not timely remit a payment as he had agreed to do, did not comply with deadlines, did not timely respond to discovery requests, and did not comply with court orders. *See* Minn. R. Prof. Conduct 1.3, 3.2, 3.4(c), 8.4(d). Finally, respondent failed to cooperate in disciplinary investigations. *See* Minn. R. Prof. Conduct 8.1(b); Rule 25, Rules on Lawyers Professional Responsibility (RLPR).

Respondent and the Director have entered into a stipulation for discipline. In it, respondent waives his procedural rights under Rule 14, RLPR, and unconditionally admits the allegations in the petition. The parties jointly recommend that the appropriate discipline is a 60-day suspension.

Along with the stipulation, the Director filed a memorandum explaining why she entered into the stipulation for discipline. The Director states that respondent submitted evidence of a mitigating factor—extreme personal stress. In light of this mitigating factor and the court’s prior cases, the Director believes a 60-day suspension is appropriate.

The court has independently reviewed the file and approves the recommended disposition.

Based upon all the files, records, and proceedings herein,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED THAT:

1. Respondent S. Steven Prince is suspended from the practice of law for a minimum of 60 days, effective 14 days from the date of this order.
2. Respondent shall pay \$900 in costs pursuant to Rule 24, RLPR.
3. Respondent shall comply with Rule 26, RLPR (requiring notice of suspension to clients, opposing counsel, and tribunals).
4. Respondent shall be eligible for reinstatement to the practice of law following the expiration of the suspension period provided that, not less than 15 days before the end of the suspension period, respondent files with the Clerk of the Appellate Courts and serves upon the Director an affidavit establishing that he is current in continuing legal

education requirements, has complied with Rules 24 and 26, RLPR, and has complied with any other conditions for reinstatement imposed by the court.

5. Respondent is not currently practicing law. Respondent shall report to the Director on an annual basis whether he is practicing law.

6. If respondent resumes practicing law in any capacity, he shall be placed on probation for 2 years, subject to the terms and conditions stated below. The probation shall begin on the date respondent begins to practice law. Respondent shall provide as much notice to the Director of his return to the practice of law as is practicable, and any notice shall be no less than 5 business days from the date respondent accepts employment or begins work, whichever occurs first. The terms and conditions of respondent's probation shall be:

a. Respondent shall cooperate fully with the Director's Office in its efforts to monitor compliance with this probation. Respondent shall promptly respond to the Director's correspondence by its due date. Respondent shall provide to the Director a current mailing address and shall immediately notify the Director of any change of address. Respondent shall cooperate with the Director's investigation of any allegations of unprofessional conduct that may come to the Director's attention. Upon the Director's request, respondent shall provide authorization for release of information and documentation to verify compliance with the terms of this probation.

b. Respondent shall abide by the Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct.

c. Respondent shall be supervised by a licensed Minnesota attorney, appointed by the Director to monitor compliance with the terms of this probation. Within 2 weeks from the date respondent begins to practice law, respondent shall provide to the Director the names of four attorneys who have agreed to be nominated as respondent's supervisor. If, after diligent effort, respondent is unable to locate a supervisor acceptable to the Director, the Director will seek to appoint a supervisor. Until a supervisor has signed

a consent to supervise, respondent shall on the first day of each month provide the Director with an inventory of active client files, as described in paragraph d. below. Respondent shall make active client files available to the Director upon request.

d. Respondent shall cooperate fully with the supervisor's efforts to monitor compliance with this probation. Respondent shall contact the supervisor and schedule a minimum of one in-person meeting per calendar quarter. Respondent shall submit to the supervisor an inventory of all active client files by the first day of each month during the probation. With respect to each active file, the inventory shall disclose the client's name, type of representation, date opened, most recent activity, next anticipated action, and anticipated closing date. Respondent's supervisor shall file written reports with the Director at least quarterly, or at such more frequent intervals as may reasonably be requested by the Director.

e. Respondent shall initiate and maintain office procedures which ensure that there are prompt responses to correspondence, telephone calls, and other important communications from clients, courts, and other persons interested in matters that respondent is handling, and which will ensure that respondent regularly reviews each and every file and completes legal matters on a timely basis.

f. Within 30 days from the date respondent resumes practicing law, respondent shall provide to the Director and to the probation supervisor, if any, a written plan outlining office procedures designed to ensure that respondent is in compliance with probation requirements. Respondent shall provide progress reports as requested.

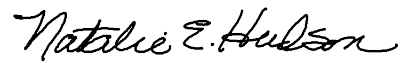
g. Respondent shall promptly initiate or continue current treatment by a licensed consulting psychologist or other mental health professional acceptable to the Director and shall complete all therapy programs recommended by that psychologist or professional. Respondent shall sign any authorization for medical/mental health records that the Director deems necessary to monitor compliance with the terms of probation.

7. Within 1 year of the date of this order, respondent shall file with the Clerk of the Appellate Courts and serve upon the Director proof of successful completion of the written examination required for admission to the practice of law by the State Board of Law Examiners on the subject of professional responsibility. *See* Rule 4.A.(5), Rules for

Admission to the Bar (requiring evidence that an applicant has successfully completed the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination). Failure to timely file the required documentation shall result in automatic suspension, as provided in Rule 18(e)(3), RLPR.

Dated: November 23, 2022

BY THE COURT:

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Natalie E. Hudson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent initial "N".

Natalie E. Hudson
Associate Justice