

PETITIONER

RONALD THOMAS BRUCE JR.

Notice is given that **Ronald Thomas Bruce Jr.**, P62579, has filed a petition in the Michigan Supreme Court and with the Attorney Grievance Commission seeking reinstatement as a member of the State Bar and restoration of his license to practice law.

In *Grievance Administrator v Ronald T. Bruce Jr.*, Case No. 16-101-GA (February 23, 2018), a panel found that the petitioner failed to refund an advance payment of fee that had not been earned, in violation of MRPC 1.16(d) (Counts One, Three, and Five); knowingly disobeyed an obligation under the rules of a tribunal, in violation of MRPC 3.4(c) (Count Two); failed to respond to a lawful demand for information from a disciplinary authority, in violation of MRPC 8.1(a)(2) (Counts One through Ten); failed to answer a request for investigation in conformity with MCR 9.113, in violation of MCR 9.104(7) (Counts One, Two, and Four through Ten); and failed or refused to appear or give evidence, and to be sworn or affirmed, after being commanded by a subpoena, in violation of MCR 9.112(D)(2) (Counts One, Three, Five and Ten). The petitioner was also found to have violated MCR 9.104(1), (2), and (4); and MRPC 8.4(a) and (c).

The panel ordered that the petitioner's license to practice law be suspended for 18 months, effective June 30, 2017, that the petitioner pay restitution to three former clients in the aggregate amount of \$2,600, and that the petitioner attend the State Bar of Michigan "Tips and Tools for a Successful Practice" seminar. The petitioner filed a petition for review, requesting a reduction in discipline. Upon review, the Attorney Discipline Board reduced the Hearing Panel's order of an 18-month suspension to a suspension of 270 days, effective June 30, 2017, and otherwise affirmed the findings of misconduct and conditions imposed by the panel described above.

In *Grievance Administrator v Ronald T. Bruce Jr.*, 17-95-GA (May 22, 2018), a panel ordered that the petitioner's license to practice law be suspended for 180 days, effective January 23, 2018. As alleged in the four-count complaint, the panel found that the

petitioner committed professional misconduct during his handling of a decedent's estate matter in Monroe County; a pending divorce matter; an objection to a referee's recommendation regarding parenting time; and by failing to timely answer three requests for investigation.

Specifically, the panel found that the petitioner neglected a legal matter entrusted to him, in violation of MRPC 1.1(c); failed to act with reasonable diligence and promptness, in violation of MRPC 1.3; failed to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of the matter, in violation of MRPC 1.4(a); failed to explain a matter to a client to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation, in violation of MRPC 1.4(b); failed to communicate to the client the basis or rate of the attorney fee before or within a reasonable time after beginning the representation, in violation of MRPC 1.5(b); engaged in the representation of a client notwithstanding having been discharged, in violation of MRPC 1.16(a)(3); upon termination of the representation of the client, failed to refund the unearned advance payment for attorney fees and costs and to return and/or turn over to the client papers to which he was entitled, in violation of MRPC 1.16(d); knowingly failed to respond to a lawful demand for information from a disciplinary authority, in violation of MRPC 8.1(a)(2); and failed to answer a request for investigation in conformity with MCR 9.113(A), in violation of MCR 9.104(7). The respondent was also found to have violated MCR 9.104(1)–(4) and MRPC 8.4(a).

In *Grievance Administrator v Ronald T. Bruce Jr.*, 18-115-GA (February 15, 2019), a panel ordered that the petitioner's license to practice law be suspended for 90 days, effective November 30, 2018.¹ The petitioner and the grievance administrator filed a stipulation for a consent order of discipline, in accordance with MCR 9.115(F)(5), which was approved by the Attorney Grievance Commission and accepted by the hearing panel. The stipulation contained the petitioner's admissions that he committed acts of professional misconduct when, during his suspension from July through November 2017, he held himself out to the public or otherwise represented that he was admitted to

practice law by maintaining his law firm under his name; and by having attorney Timothy Laitur make court appearances on behalf of the law firm and file pleadings on behalf of the law firm.

Based on the petitioner's admissions and the stipulation of the parties, the panel found that the petitioner practiced law in a jurisdiction in violation of the regulation of the legal profession in that jurisdiction, or assisted another in doing so, contrary to MRPC 5.5(a); though not admitted to practice law in this jurisdiction, established an office or other systematic and continuous presence in this jurisdiction for the practice of law, in violation of MRPC 5.5(b)(1); though not admitted to practice in this jurisdiction, held himself out to the public or otherwise represented that he was admitted to practice law in this jurisdiction, in violation of MRPC 5.5(b)(2); used or participated in the use of a form of public communication that was false, fraudulent, misleading, or deceptive, and contained a material misrepresentation of fact or omitted a fact necessary to make the statement considered as a whole not materially misleading, in violation of MRPC 7.1(a); used a firm name, letterhead, or other professional designation that violated MRPC 7.1, contrary to MRPC 7.5(a); stated or implied that he practiced in a partnership or other organization when that was not the fact, in violation of MRPC 7.5(d); during the period of his suspension, engaged in conduct that constituted the practice of law, in violation of MCR 9.119(E)(1); during the period of his suspension, appeared as an attorney before a court, in violation of MCR 9.119(E)(3); and during the period of his suspension, held himself out as an attorney, in violation of MCR 9.119(E)(4). The petitioner was also found to have violated MCR 9.104(1)–(4); and MRPC 8.4(a) and (c).

A hearing is scheduled for Monday, January 6, 2020, beginning at 9:30 a.m., at the office of the Attorney Discipline Board, 333 W. Fort St., Ste. 1700, Detroit, MI 48226.

In the interest of maintaining the high standards imposed on the legal profession as conditions for the privilege to practice law in this state, and of protecting the public, the judiciary, and the legal profession against conduct contrary to such standards, the petitioner will be required to establish

his eligibility for reinstatement by clear and convincing evidence.

Any interested person may appear at the hearing and request to be heard in support of or in opposition to the petition for reinstatement. Any person having information bearing on the petitioner's eligibility for reinstatement should contact:

Nathan C. Pitluk
Associate Counsel
Attorney Grievance Commission
535 Griswold, Ste. 1700
Detroit, MI 48226
(313) 961-6585

REQUIREMENTS OF THE PETITIONER

The petitioner is required to establish the following by clear and convincing evidence:

1. He desires in good faith to be restored to the privilege to practice law in this state.
2. The term of the suspension or revocation of his license, whichever is applicable, has elapsed.
3. He has not practiced or attempted to practice law contrary to the requirement of his suspension or revocation.
4. He has complied fully with the terms of the order of discipline.
5. His conduct since the order of discipline has been exemplary and above reproach.
6. He has a proper understanding of and attitude toward the standards that are imposed on members of the Bar and will conduct himself in conformity with those standards.
7. He can safely be recommended to the public, the courts, and the legal profession as a person fit to be consulted by others and to represent them and otherwise act in matters of trust and confidence, and, in general, to aid in the administration of justice as a member of the Bar and as an officer of the court.
8. If he has been out of the practice of law for three years or more, he has been recertified by the Board of Law Examiners.
9. He has reimbursed or has agreed to reimburse the Client Protection Fund any money paid from the fund as a result of his conduct. Failure to fully reimburse as agreed is grounds for revocation of a reinstatement.

ENDNOTE

1. On February 18, 2018, Ronald T. Bruce Jr., filed a petition for reinstatement. On or about April 2, 2018, the grievance administrator filed a motion to stay proceedings, requesting the stay because there was an additional disciplinary case then pending against the petitioner, *Grievance Administrator v Ronald Thomas Bruce Jr.*, ADB Case No. 17-95-GA. The stay was granted. The 180-day period of the suspension ordered in ADB Case No. 17-85-GA ran on July 23, 2018, at which time the petitioner was eligible to petition for reinstatement from the suspension, and also to seek to have the stay lifted. On or about October 4, 2018, the grievance administrator filed a new formal complaint, *Grievance Administrator v Ronald Thomas Bruce Jr.*, ADB Case No. 18-115-GA. The panel issued another stay pending the outcome of the new disciplinary proceedings on January 6, 2019. On May 14, 2019, the petitioner filed a motion to withdraw his petition for reinstatement, which was granted on May 16, 2019. The voluntary dismissal is not considered an order denying reinstatement under MCR 9.124(d) for purposes of filing limitations under MCR 9.123(D)(4).



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