

**G**eneral questions regarding attorney discipline should be directed to the Office of Chief Disciplinary Counsel, toll free (877) 953-5535 or (512) 453-5535. The Board of Disciplinary Appeals may be reached at (512) 475-1578. Information and copies of actual orders are available at [txboda.org](http://txboda.org). The State Commission on Judicial Conduct may be contacted toll free at (877) 228-5750 or (512) 463-5533. Please note that persons disciplined by the Commission on Judicial Conduct are not necessarily licensed attorneys.

## REINSTATEMENTS

**Juan R. Ledesma** [#12108700], 63, of Mission, filed a petition in the 275th Judicial District of Hidalgo County (Cause No. C-813-11-E) for reinstatement as a member of the State Bar of Texas.

## BODA

On Feb. 28, 2014, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals affirmed a judgment of partially probated suspension of Dallas and Destin, Fla., attorney **Max Leon Tepper** [#24033377], 40, signed by an evidentiary panel of the District 6A-2 Grievance Committee of the State Bar of Texas on Aug. 8, 2012, in Case No. D0020936831. The board affirmed the finding that Tepper vio-

lated Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct 8.04(a)(3) [a lawyer shall not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation]. His sanction was stayed during his appeal. The stay is now dissolved, and he is suspended from the practice of law for three years, with the first year active and the remainder probated. BODA Cause No. 50185.

On March 10, 2014, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals dismissed for want of prosecution the appeal of **George Michael Barnes** [#01767100], 59, of Fort Worth, from a judgment of partially probated suspension signed on Sept. 10, 2013, by an evidentiary panel of the District 7-4 Grievance

Committee of the State Bar of Texas in Case No. D0061245880. Barnes did not file a brief and the board issued an order to show cause to Barnes on Jan. 13, 2014. The show cause order gave him 30 days to respond and show cause as to why the appeal should not be dismissed for want of prosecution. Barnes did not respond. BODA Cause No. 53201.

On Feb. 3, 2014, the Board of Disciplinary Appeals affirmed the modified judgment of partially probated suspension of **Stephen Carrigan** [#03877000], 59, of Corpus Christi, signed by an evidentiary panel of the District 4-5 Grievance Committee of the State Bar of Texas on June 14, 2013, in Case Nos. S0110922865, S0061023869, and S0071024008. The board affirmed the findings that Carrigan violated Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct 5.03(a) and 5.03(b)(1). After this decision was reported by the board, Carrigan appealed the judgment to the Supreme Court of Texas in Cause No. 14-0123 on Feb. 14, 2014. By order issued by the District 4-5 Grievance Committee, his partially probated suspension is stayed pending his appeal to the Supreme Court of Texas. BODA Cause No. 52611.

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## RESIGNATIONS

On Jan. 15, 2014, the Supreme Court of Texas accepted the resignation in lieu of discipline of **Hilda Q. Valadez** [#20421843], 52, of San Antonio. At the time of resignation, two matters were pending alleging that Valadez knowingly presented attorneys' fees expense claim forms ostensibly bearing the signature of approval by judges that were not genuine or authorized signatures of the judges.

Valadez allegedly violated Rules 8.04(a)(1) and 8.04(a)(3).

## SUSPENSIONS

On Feb. 12, 2014, **Ricardo A. Baca** [#24048333], 37, of Houston, received a three-year partially probated suspension effective April 7, 2014, with the first year actively suspended and the remainder probated. An evidentiary panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that in the first matter, Baca was hired to represent his client's father in a criminal case and was paid an advance of attorneys' fees, which Baca deposited into his trust account. Within two weeks, the client terminated Baca's employment and requested the return of any unearned fees, which were no longer in Baca's trust account. In the second matter, Baca was hired for representation in a contract dispute. The client paid Baca, and the funds were deposited into Baca's trust account; however, Baca almost immediately withdrew all of the funds instead of billing against them during the course of the representation. The client made numerous attempts to contact Baca to ascertain the status of his case, but Baca failed to communicate with the client. In both matters, Baca failed to respond to the grievances.

Baca violated Rules 1.03(a), 1.14(a), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$10,000 in restitution and \$6,073.36 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

Baca has filed a notice of appeal.

On Jan. 24, 2014, **Orlando Flores DeHoyos** [#05644080], 54, of Ozona, accepted a one-year fully probated suspension. An evidentiary panel of the District 15 Grievance Committee found that DeHoyos failed to communicate with a client, failed to return an unearned fee, and engaged in the practice of law while his license was suspended.

DeHoyos violated Rules 1.03(a), 1.03(b), 1.15(d), and 8.04(a)(11). He was ordered to pay \$500 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On Feb. 7, 2014, **Ronald Ray Higgins** [#00795784], 51, of Weslaco, received a six-month fully probated

suspension. An evidentiary panel of the District 10 Grievance Committee found that Higgins neglected client matters, failed to communicate with clients, failed to surrender property to a client, failed to properly supervise his non-lawyer employee, and knowingly assisted another in violating the disciplinary rules.

Higgins violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.15(d), 5.03(b)(1), and 8.04(a)(1). He was ordered to pay \$1,000 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On Feb. 12, 2014, Higgins received a two-year fully probated suspension effective Feb. 1, 2014. An evidentiary panel of the District 12 Grievance Committee found, in connection with three grievances, Higgins's employee improperly communicated with one represented by counsel and Higgins permitted a non-lawyer employee to initiate in-person contact with prospective clients to seek professional employment. Higgins failed

to properly supervise his non-lawyer employees and assisted another in violating the disciplinary rules. Higgins also failed to respond to one grievance.

Higgins violated Rules 4.02(a), 5.03(b)(1), 7.03(a), 7.03(b), 8.04(a)(1), and 8.04(a)(8). He was ordered to pay \$5,000 in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

On Feb. 20, 2014, **Stephen M. Jackson** [#10496450], 58, of Irving, agreed to an 18-month probated suspension effective Feb. 20, 2014. An evidentiary panel of the District 6 Grievance Committee found that in representing complainant in his family law matter, Jackson neglected the legal matter entrusted to him by failing to perform any legal services. Jackson failed to keep complainant reasonably informed about the status of his matter and failed to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from

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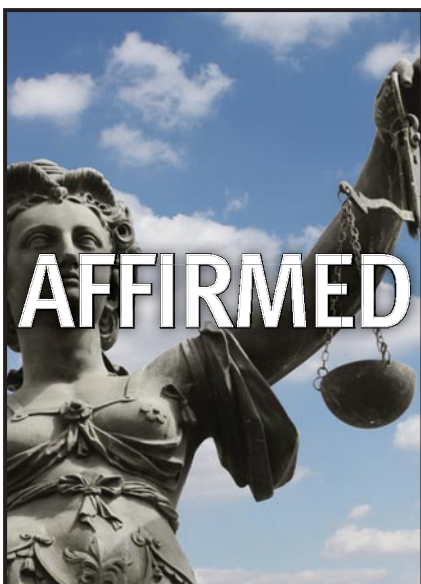
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## DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

complainant. Upon termination of representation in complainant's matter, Jackson failed to refund advance payments of fee that had not been earned.

Jackson violated Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), and 1.15(d). He was ordered to pay \$1,750 in attorneys' fees and \$2,500 in restitution.

On Jan. 10, 2014, **Waverly R. Nolley** [#15067420], 54, of Houston, received a six-month fully probated suspension effective Feb. 1, 2014. An evidentiary panel of the District 4 Grievance Committee found that respondent failed to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from his clients and failed to explain the status of their personal injury matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit them to make an informed decision regarding the representation.

Nolley violated Rules 1.03(a) and 1.03(b). He was ordered to pay \$895

in attorneys' fees and direct expenses.

### PUBLIC REPRIMANDS

On July 25, 2012, **Christopher Michael Dupuy** [#24003931], 42, of Kemah, received a judgment of public reprimand. An evidentiary panel of the District 5 Grievance Committee found that in representing complainant, Dupuy neglected the legal matter entrusted to him and failed to explain the matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation.

Dupuy violated Rules 1.01(b)(1) and 1.03(b). He was ordered to pay \$2,500 in attorneys' fees and \$2,000 in direct expenses.

Dupuy appealed, and the judgment was affirmed by the Board of Disciplinary Appeals on July 29, 2013.

### PRIVATE REPRIMANDS

Listed below is a breakdown of Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct violations for eight attorneys, with the number in parentheses indicating the frequency of violation. Please note that an attorney may be reprimanded for more than one rule violation.

1.01(b)(1)—for neglecting a legal matter entrusted to the lawyer (3).

1.03(a)—for failing to keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information (3).

1.14(b)—for failing, upon receiving funds or other property in which a client or third person has an interest, to promptly notify the client or third person and render a full accounting upon request (1).

1.15(d)—for failing, upon termination of representation, to reasonably protect a client's interests, give notice to the client to seek other counsel, or surrender papers and property that belong to the client (4).

8.04(a)(8)—for failing to timely furnish a district grievance committee a response or other information as required unless he or she timely asserts a privilege or other legal ground for failure to do so (1). **TBJ**

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