

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA

THE FLORIDA BAR,

Complainant,

v.

CHELSEA ELIZABETH HARITAN,

Respondent.

Supreme Court Case
No. SC2025-0439

The Florida Bar File
Nos. 2022-50,624(17F) &
2023-50,584(17F)

_____ /

AMENDED REPORT OF REFEREE ACCEPTING CONSENT JUDGMENT

I. SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

The undersigned was appointed as referee under R. Regulating Fla. Bar 3-7.6 to preside over the proceedings in this case.

On March 28, 2025, The Florida Bar (the bar) filed its complaint against respondent. On April 23, 2025, the bar filed its Request for Admissions in these proceedings. The Supreme Court of Florida entered an order on April 4, 2025, designating the Chief Judge of the Fifteenth Judicial Circuit of Florida to appoint a referee in this case. The Honorable Glenn D. Kelley appointed the undersigned to serve as the referee.

Throughout these proceedings, the bar was represented by Bar Counsel, Randall L. Berman. Respondent was pro se.

All of the pleadings, responses, exhibits received in evidence, and this report constitute the record in this case and are filed with the Supreme Court of Florida.

II. FINDINGS OF FACT

A. Jurisdictional Statement. Respondent is, and at all times mentioned during these proceedings was, a member of The Florida Bar, subject to the jurisdiction and Rules Regulating The Florida Bar adopted by the Supreme Court of Florida.

B. Narrative Summary Of Case.

As to The Florida Bar File No. 2022-50,624(17F):

1. Respondent represented the plaintiff in *Amarco Restoration v. American Coastal Ins. Co.*, Case No. 2018-CA-4242 in the Circuit Court of the Ninth Judicial Circuit in and for Orange County, Florida.

2. On or about January 1, 2021, the court in that case issued an Order Granting Defendant's Motion for Order to Show Cause and for Attorney's Fees and Costs.

3. In the First Order to Show Cause, the court found that respondent failed to confer with opposing counsel to schedule a

deposition, failed to appear (along with the witness) at that deposition, and improperly released the witness from the related subpoena.

4. On or about January 22, 2021, the court issued another Order Granting Defendant's Motion for Order to Show Cause and for Attorney's Fees and Costs.

5. In the Second Order to Show Cause, the court found that respondent failed to respond to written discovery requests, failed to produce responsive documents, and failed to observe court deadlines relating to the discovery dispute.

6. The court found that respondent's conduct amounted to bad faith.

7. Respondent was ultimately sanctioned by the Court, and was ordered to pay defendant's fees and costs in the amount of \$47,912.13.

8. On or about September 9, 2022, The Florida Bar filed a Petition for Contempt and Order to Show Cause relating to respondent's failure to respond to the bar grievance in this matter.

The Petition for Contempt proceedings were styled *TFB v. Haritan*, Case No. SC22-1193 (TFB File No. 2023-50,104(17F)).

9. On or about September 9, 2022, the Florida Supreme Court entered an order to show cause as to why respondent should not be held in contempt. Respondent did not respond.

10. On November 14, 2022, the Florida Supreme Court entered an order holding respondent in contempt and suspending respondent from the practice of law until respondent fully responded to the original bar inquiry.

As to The Florida Bar File No. 2023-50,584(17F):

1. Respondent represented the plaintiff in *Florida Services Team, LLC v. Olympus Ins. Co.*, Case No 19-002502-CA in the 14th Judicial Circuit in and for Bay County, Florida.

2. This matter was an insurance dispute, and the plaintiff had already been paid in full by the insurer prior to suit.

3. The insurance company sought summary judgment and sanctions against respondent under Fla. Stat. §57.105.

4. On May 11, 2022, the court entered an order granting the requested relief to the defendants.

5. In the order, the court found that there was “no factual basis” for the lawsuit.

6. During the litigation, respondent failed to appear at hearings, failed to confer with opposing counsel, and failed to file a motion to withdraw or stipulate to the substitution of counsel.

7. As a sanction, the court awarded \$6,500.00 for attorney’s fees to be borne equally by respondent and her client.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO GUILT

I recommend that the respondent be found guilty of violating the following Rules Regulating The Florida Bar: 4-1.1 [Competence.]; 4-1.3 [Diligence.]; 4-3.1 [Meritorious Claims and Contentions.]; 4-3.2 [Expediting Litigation.]; 4-3.4 [Fairness to Opposing Party and Counsel.]; and 4-8.4 [Misconduct]

IV. PERSONAL HISTORY AND PAST DISCIPLINARY RECORD

Before recommending discipline under R. Regulating Fla. Bar 3-7.6(m)(2)(D), I considered the following personal history of the respondent:

Age: 39

Date admitted to the Bar: September 19, 2012

Prior Discipline: Respondent was suspended by Supreme Court Order dated for her failure to repose to The Florida Bar's written investigative inquiries.

V. STANDARDS FOR IMPOSING LAWYER SANCTIONS

I considered the following Florida Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions before recommending discipline:

4.4 Lack of Diligence

(b) Suspension. Suspension is appropriate when a lawyer causes injury or potential injury to a client and:

- (1) knowingly fails to perform services for a client; or
- (2) engages in a pattern of neglect with respect to client matters.

7.1 Deceptive Conduct or Statements and Unreasonable or Improper Fees

(b) Suspension. Suspension is appropriate when a lawyer knowingly engages in conduct that is a violation of a duty owed as a professional and causes injury or potential injury to a client, the public, or the legal system.

I find the following aggravating factors:

3.2(b) Aggravation

- (3) a pattern of misconduct;
- (4) multiple offenses;

(5) bad faith obstruction of the disciplinary proceeding by intentionally failing to comply with rules or orders of the disciplinary agency;

(9) substantial experience in the practice of law.

I find the following mitigating factors:

3.3(b) Mitigation

(2) absence of a dishonest or selfish motive;

(8) physical or mental disability or impairment;

(11) imposition of other penalties or sanctions;

(12) remorse

VI. CASE LAW

I considered the following case law before recommending discipline:

The Florida Bar v. Alan Howard Ramer, 2022 WL 1598899 (Fla. May 20, 2022) Respondent received a 91-day suspension. This matter was based on a judicial referral stemming from a May 24, 2019 Order of Suspension entered by the U. S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida. Respondent was disciplined for misconduct while representing the defendants in a civil matter. During the pendency of the litigation, respondent repeatedly failed to timely comply with discovery requests and/or produce complete responses, failed to attend court ordered

mediation (along with his clients), failed to respond to opposing counsel's emails, failed to comply with court orders, and failed to comply with the Local Rules for the Southern District Court of Florida. Monetary sanctions were imposed as a result. Consequently, the judge referred respondent to the Committee for mentoring, supervision, and monitoring to ensure that his conduct would meet the standards of professionalism that the court expects from attorneys practicing before it.

The Florida Bar v. Barbara Jean Throne, 2021 WL 58830 (Fla. Jan. 7, 2021) 91 day suspension and Ethics School and Professionalism Workshop. Respondent represented a client in a criminal matter resulting in a 23-year prison sentence. Respondent thereafter filed a Notice of Appeal on behalf of the client. After hearing nothing about the status of his case, the client attempted to contact respondent via his mother and sister but respondent failed to contact him. On March 1, 2018, the 1st DCA issued an order stating that R failed to timely file a completed electronic docketing statement and had 10 days to do so to avoid imposition of sanctions, including dismissal of the appeal. On April 3, 2018, the court ordered respondent to show cause within 10 days why the appeal should not be dismissed. On April 18, 2018, the client wrote respondent asking for info on

his appeal and had his mother and sister contact the office again. Respondent failed to respond to all communication efforts. On April 21, 2018, the client wrote to the court advising of respondent's lack of communication. The letter was forwarded to respondent by the clerk of courts. On May 10, 2018, when respondent failed to e-file a completed docketing statement, the court issued a second order to show cause. On June 14, 2018, the court dismissed the appeal. After the client filed a bar complaint, respondent failed to timely respond.

VII. RECOMMENDATION AS TO DISCIPLINARY MEASURES TO BE IMPOSED

I recommend that the respondent be found guilty of misconduct justifying disciplinary measures and be disciplined by:

A. Suspension from the practice of law for 91 days, effective immediately upon entry of the Supreme Court of Florida's Order approving the consent judgment.

B. Before petitioning for reinstatement, respondent must undergo an evaluation by an approved Florida Lawyers Assistance, Inc. provider, comply with all recommendations, and receive a recommendation from Florida Lawyers Assistance, Inc. in support of the reinstatement.

C. Payment of The Florida Bar's costs.

VIII. STATEMENT OF COSTS AND MANNER IN WHICH COSTS SHOULD BE TAXED

I find the following costs were reasonably incurred by The Florida Bar:

Administrative Fee	\$1,250.00
TOTAL	\$1,250.00

I recommend that the above costs be charged to the respondent and that interest accrue at the statutory rate. If the respondent does not satisfy the cost judgment within 30 days of the judgment becoming final, the respondent will be delinquent and ineligible to practice law under R. Regulating Fla. Bar 1-3.6, unless otherwise deferred by the Board of Governors of The Florida Bar.

Dated this ____15th____ day of __May__, 2025.

/s/

Hon. Sherri L. Collins, Referee

Filed with the Supreme Court of Florida via the Florida Courts E-Filing Portal with copies served via the Portal to:

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