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IN THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA
(Before a Referee)

THE FLORIDA BAR,

Complainant,

v.

COLIN MUNRO CAMERON,

Respondent.

______________________/

Supreme Court Case
No. SC2025-0668

The Florida Bar File
No. 2023-30,600(19B)

REPORT OF REFEREE

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 May 13, 2025, The Florida Bar (the bar) filed its complaint against respondent in these proceedings. The Supreme Court of Florida entered an order on May 13, 2025, designating the Chief Judge of the Eighteenth Judicial Circuit of Florida to appoint a referee in this case. The Honorable Charles G. Crawford appointed the undersigned to serve as the referee.

Throughout these proceedings, the bar was represented by Edward Charles Park. Respondent was represented by Jeffrey Allen Fadley.

On October 20, 2025, a final hearing was held in this matter. At the final hearing, the following exhibits were entered into evidence: The Florida

Bar exhibits 1 – 18; Respondent’s exhibits 1 – 17. At the final hearing, the bar called Bonnie McCallum-Walters and Derek Williams to testify, and the respondent testified during his case in chief. A separate sanctions hearing was held on October 31, 2025. At the sanctions hearing, there was no further evidence or testimony presented from either party.

All items properly filed including pleadings, recorded testimony (if transcribed), exhibits in evidence, and the report of referee constitute the record in this case and are filed with the Supreme Court of Florida.

II. FINDINGS OF FACT

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.

Narrative Summary Of Case. Respondent was not diligent in his representation of Derek Williams in relation to Mr. Williams' father's estate and charged an excessive fee.

Respondent represents Derek Williams, the personal representative, in a probate matter. The decedent died owning property in Florida, Georgia, and the Bahamas.

On March 20, 2008, the estate was opened by another attorney and Mr. Williams, the son of the decedent, was appointed as personal representative.

Respondent became the attorney for the estate in August 2008.

Mr. Williams opened an ancillary probate in Georgia prior to respondent representing him. Respondent was hired solely to deal with the Florida estate, and respondent was advised that Mr. Williams would handle the estates in Georgia and the Bahamas.

However, the respondent admitted that the domiciliary estate receives the net proceeds from the ancillary estates and would be distributed to the beneficiaries through the Florida estate matter. Despite this, the respondent had little to no contact with the Georgia estate attorney.

In early 2024, Bonnie McCallum-Walters, the decedent's wife, hired an attorney as she believed that respondent allowed the personal representative, Mr. Williams, to mishandle the estate. Ms. McCallum-Walters further complained of the length of time the estate remained open. Her husband passed away in February 2008, and the probate case was opened in March 2008, it was now 2024.

Pursuant to the register of actions, regular activity continued in the case from its inception until, on or about, November 4, 2009. Except for the filing of Notices of Unavailability and correspondence to the Court by the decedent's widow, there was no record activity in the case for eleven years and four months, from November 4, 2009, until March 30, 2022.

The respondent alleged lack of communication from the personal representative, Mr. Williams. The Court finds the contrary. From the evidence presented, it appears as though the majority, if not all, of the communication between the respondent and Mr. Williams was initiated by Mr. Williams. The evidence reflects that Mr. Williams sent numerous e-mails over the course of many years to the respondent in an effort to close the estate. In September 2019, respondent acknowledged that "I will need to review the file in detail. It has been quite some time since anything was done on this estate."

In response to another inquiry from Mr. Williams in March 2021, respondent stated, "Thanks for reminding me of this case."

In June of 2021, respondent advised Mr. Williams that "I am struggling to get a good grasp on everything" and inquired if Mr. Williams had any information from the Bahamas regarding the property in the Bahamas. It should be noted that Mr. Williams previously advised the respondent that he could not get anything from the Bahamas, and he believed that the government had confiscated the property.

In April 2021, respondent requested and received another retainer from Mr. Williams to continue the representation.

In July 2021, Mr. Williams, again, gave respondent an accounting of the estate assets.

Respondent did not file a final accounting of the estate until November 2023. According to the final accounting, respondent received fees totaling an estimated $13,800.00. Ms. McCallum-Walters' attorney filed Objections to Personal Representative's Third Amended Final Accounting on or about February 7, 2024.

On July 30, 2025, the probate court issued its Order Denying Objections of Spouse; Order Approving Final Accounting; Order Approving Plan of Distribution Therein; and Order Discharging Personal Representative. In the order, the probate court approved respondent’s attorney’s fees.

In review of the respondent’s own billing records, the only billing activity for 2011, 2012 and 2013 was for preparation of Notices of Unavailability. For over four years, there were no billing entries in the case.

The Court notes that regular billing activity did not resume until after the decedent’s widow filed her complaint with The Florida Bar.

Respondent admitted "We have probably more cases than I should be trying to deal with."

Ultimately, the estate remained pending for 17 years after it was initially opened in March 2008, 11 years and 4 months with little to no record activity. The Court further notes that throughout the final hearing on this complaint, the respondent’s lack of remorse was striking. The respondent shifted the blame for the delay to the personal representative, the Georgia probate attorney and to opposing counsel for refusing to coordinate hearing time. The Court also notes that the respondent was more than fifteen minutes late for both the guilt phase of the final hearing and the sanction phase of the hearing.

RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO GUILT

I recommend that respondent be found **guilty** of violating the following Rules Regulating The Florida Bar:

4-1.3 Diligence. A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

4-3.2 Expediting Litigation. A lawyer shall make reasonable efforts to expedite litigation consistent with the interests of the client.

I recommend that respondent be found **not guilty** of violating the following Rules Regulating The Florida Bar:

4-1.5 legal, Prohibited, or Clearly Excessive Fees and Costs. A lawyer must not enter into an agreement for, charge, or collect an illegal, prohibited, or clearly excessive fee or cost, or a fee generated by employment that was obtained through advertising or solicitation not in compliance with the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar. A fee or cost is clearly excessive when: (1) after a review of the facts, a lawyer of ordinary prudence would be left with a definite and firm conviction that the fee or the cost exceeds a reasonable fee or cost for services provided to such a degree as to constitute clear overreaching or an unconscionable demand by the lawyer; or (2) the fee or cost is sought or secured by the lawyer by means of intentional misrepresentation or fraud upon the client, a nonclient party, or any court, as to either entitlement to, or amount of, the fee.

4-8.4(d) Misconduct. A lawyer shall not engage in conduct in connection with the practice of law that is prejudicial to the administration of justice, including to knowingly, or through callous indifference, disparage, humiliate, or discriminate against litigants, jurors, witnesses, court personnel, or other lawyers on any basis, including, but not limited to, on account of race, ethnicity, gender, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, age, socioeconomic status, employment, or physical characteristic.

III. 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 Respondent:

Age: 78

Date admitted to the Bar: April 10, 1979

Prior Discipline: None

IV. STANDARDS FOR IMPOSING LAWYER SANCTIONS

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

4.4 Lack of Diligence

(b) 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.

I find the following aggravating factors under standard 3.2(b):

(3) a pattern of misconduct;

(4) multiple offenses;

(7) refusal to acknowledge the wrongful nature of the conduct;

(9) substantial experience in the practice of law.

I find the following mitigating factors under standard 3.3(b):

(1) absence of a prior disciplinary record;

(2) absence of a dishonest or selfish motive.

V. <u>CASE LAW</u>

I considered the following case law before recommending discipline:

<u>The Florida Bar v. Kenny</u>, 2020 WL 7259167 (Fla. Dec. 10, 2020) – An attorney received a 60-day suspension and was required to attend Ethics School and complete 30 hours of CLE in family law. The attorney failed to competently and diligently handle a paternity and termination of parental rights case. The attorney had no prior experience in this specific area of law. The attorney had no prior discipline. Rules violated: 4-1.1 and 4-1.3.

<u>The Florida Bar v. Newmark</u>, 2020 WL 5870523 (Fla. Oct. 2, 2020) – The Court suspended an attorney for 45 days, followed by one year of probation. The attorney represented complainant, her husband and her daughter in a tenant eviction matter and cross claim involving a black mold issue. She failed to properly communicate with her clients and failed to diligently pursue their legal matter. Rules violated: 4-1.1; 4-1.2 (a); 4-1.3; 4-1.4 (a); and 4-3.2.

The Florida Bar v. Sabir, 2022 WL 16641087 (Fla. Nov. 3, 2022) – An attorney was suspended for 30 days. In two separate immigration matters, the attorney failed to provide his clients with competent and diligent representation. He also failed to adequately communicate with his clients. The attorney made some restitution to account for his neglect. He had prior discipline for similar misconduct. Rules violated: 4-1.1; 4-1.2; 4-1.3; 4-1.4; 4-1.5; and 4-8.4.

The Florida Bar v. Spindel, 2022 WL 16641080 (Fla. Nov. 3, 2022)– An attorney was suspended for 30 days. In two separate bankruptcy matters, the attorney failed to provide his clients with diligent representation and failed to adequately communicate with his clients. In his response (but not publicly), he accused one client of attempting to perpetrate criminal tax and bankruptcy fraud by filing a bankruptcy petition. Without the client's authorization, the attorney also submitted to the bar unredacted documents containing her financial information. He explained to the bar that he was overseas during the relevant time period and that civil unrest in Hong Kong in 2019 had sharply limited his ability to communicate abroad. The attorney fully refunded his fees, and he had no prior discipline. Rules violated: 4-1.3; 4-1.4; 4-1.5; 4-1.6 (a); and 4-8.4 (d).

The Florida Bar v. Ciener, 2020 WL 6821614 (Fla. Nov. 20, 2020) – The Court approved a 30-day suspension and completion of Ethics School. In August of 2018, a mother hired the attorney to represent her son in his pending criminal cases. He was charged with First Degree Felony Murder and Robbery with a Firearm while Inflicting Death. The attorney failed to provide the son with competent and diligent representation because the attorney failed to take depositions, failed to provide the son with his discovery materials and failed to file a motion to suppress evidence. The attorney also failed to communicate properly with the son. The attorney visited the son at the jail only once during a period of 10 months. The attorney did not communicate with the son regarding the preparation of his defense or provide him with discovery materials. The attorney's wife and law partner appeared on the son's behalf at some court hearings, but she was able only to briefly discuss matters with the son at these court appearances. The attorney intended to meet with the son the Friday before the trial date to discuss the case. However, the mother terminated the attorney's legal services and hired new counsel to represent the son. Therefore, the meeting did not take place. In mitigation, the attorney had no dishonest or selfish motive and fully cooperated with the bar. In aggravation, he had a prior disciplinary history and substantial experience in the practice of law. Respondent violated the following Rules Regulating The Florida Bar: 4-1.1; 4-1.2 (a); 4-1.3; 4-1.4 (a); 4-1.4 (b); and 4-8.4 (d).

VI. RECOMMENDATION AS TO DISCIPLINARY MEASURES TO BE IMPOSED

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

A. Suspension for a period of 30 days.

B. Respondent will attend Ethic School, in person where scheduled by the bar within six months of the date of the Supreme Court of Florida's order and pay associated fees totaling $750.00 before attendance.

C. Payment of The Florida Bar's costs in these proceedings.

VII. 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
Bar Counsel Cost		$521.28
Court Reporters Fees		$1,025.50
Investigative Costs		$260.24
Referee Costs		$400.77
	TOTAL	$3,457.79

I recommend that the above costs be charged to respondent and that interest accrue at the statutory rate. Respondent will be delinquent 30 days after the judgment in this case becomes final unless respondent pays the costs in full, or the Board of Governors of The Florida Bar defers payment under R. Regulating Fla. Bar 1-3.6.

Dated this 18th day of November, 2025.

/s/ Michelle Pruitt Studstill
HON. MICHELLE PRUITT STUDSTILL
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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