

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA
(Before a Referee)

THE FLORIDA BAR,

Complainant,

Supreme Court Case No.
SC2025-1834

v.

The Florida Bar File No.
2025-30,238(10A)

TERESA SCHIELE ROPER,

Respondent.

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 November 21, 2025, The Florida Bar filed a Notice of Determination or Judgment of Guilt concerning respondent's felony charge. The Court entered an order the same day immediately suspending respondent pursuant to Rule 3-7.2(f). The Supreme Court of Florida's order further designated the Chief Judge of the Tenth Judicial Circuit of Florida to appoint a referee in this case. As Chief Judge, I appointed myself to serve as the referee.

Throughout these proceedings, the bar was represented by Jill Marie Hampton and Robert Camacho. Respondent was represented by Thomas

Devlin Sommerville.

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.

1. This disciplinary matter involves respondent's arrest and plea of nolo contendere to Battery on a Law Enforcement Officer, a third-degree felony punishable by a maximum sentence of five years imprisonment.

2. Respondent was arrested on October 5, 2024. She was charged by Information with Battery on a Law Enforcement Officer, a third-degree felony, on January 21, 2025.

3. On October 24, 2025, respondent pled nolo contendere to the charge. The court withheld adjudication. Respondent was

sentenced to a term of imprisonment of four days, with credit for four days served, and placed on supervised probation for 12 months with the following conditions: successful completion of an Anger Management class; not to possess or consume illegal drugs or alcohol and to take any medication as prescribed; completion of 35 hours of community service at a non-profit; and write a letter of apology to the victim within 30 days. Respondent also was ordered to pay fines and costs totaling \$669.00. The court did not order restitution.

4. On October 23, 2025, respondent filed her notice of completion of the Anger Management class.

5. The underlying facts concern respondent celebrating her birthday at a Disney hotel where she became intoxicated and argumentative.

6. Because respondent's behavior was disturbing other guests, she was asked to leave and trespassed by hotel management.

7. After law enforcement arrived, respondent was initially somewhat calm and cooperative. However, once in the lobby area on

the floor where her room was located, she became belligerent and after loudly screaming at the officer who was escorting her out, she physically battered him. The scene in the lobby area was witnessed by many people, which included hotel guests and their families.

8. The deputy's report stated that respondent's rings cut his skin near his eye. The officer immediately took respondent down to the floor, briefly rendering her unconscious.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS AS TO GUILT

I recommend that respondent be found guilty of violating the following Rule Regulating The Florida Bar: 4-8.4(b) Misconduct (A lawyer shall not commit a criminal act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness as a lawyer in other respects).

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 respondent:

Age: 62

Date admitted to the Bar: May 11, 1990

Prior Discipline: None

V. STANDARDS FOR IMPOSING LAWYER SANCTIONS

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

5.1 Failure to Maintain Personal Integrity

(a)(1) Disbarment is appropriate when a lawyer is convicted of a felony under applicable law.

(b) Suspension is appropriate when a lawyer knowingly engages in criminal conduct which is not included elsewhere in this subdivision or other conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation that seriously adversely reflects on the lawyer's fitness to practice.

7.1 Deceptive Conduct or Statements and Unreasonable or Improper Fees

(b) 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 factor:

3.2(b)(9) substantial experience in the practice of law.

I find the following mitigating factors:

3.3(b)(1) absence of a prior disciplinary record;

3.3(b)(11) imposition of other penalties or sanctions.

VI. CASE LAW

I considered the following case law before recommending discipline:

In The Florida Bar v. Bruzzese, 2019 WL 655473 (Fla. Feb. 14, 2019) (Unpublished Disposition), a lawyer was suspended for three years, ordered to obtain an evaluation through FLA, Inc. and abide by all recommendations made by FLA, Inc., including entering into a rehabilitation contract if deemed necessary, and pay the bar's costs. In the criminal matter, the lawyer was found guilty by a jury of Resisting an Officer with Violence, a third-degree felony, and Resisting an Officer without Violence, a first-degree misdemeanor. The court withheld adjudication on the felony and entered an adjudication on the misdemeanor. The lawyer was sentenced to three years of probation along with other special conditions. She had been staying at a hotel after being displaced by a hurricane. After being asked to leave following a disturbance, she refused to leave in a timely manner and the police were called. She was taken into custody, and was not cooperative with the police before, during, and after being placed in handcuffs.

In The Florida Bar v. Heimendinger, 2023 WL 8824680 (Fla. Dec. 21, 2023) (Unpublished Disposition), a lawyer was suspended for two years.

Prior to petitioning for reinstatement, the lawyer was required to undergo a substance abuse evaluation by an approved FLA, Inc. provider, comply with any recommendations including completing a minimum period of sobriety of at least one year, and receive a recommendation from FLA, Inc. in support of his reinstatement. The lawyer entered a plea of no contest to aggravated assault and carrying concealed firearm, both third-degree felonies, and improper exhibition of a dangerous weapon and battery, both first-degree misdemeanors. The court withheld adjudication on the two felony counts and adjudicated him guilty of the two misdemeanor charges. The lawyer was sentenced on the felony counts to five years of probation and on the misdemeanor counts to two days of incarceration with credit for time served. In aggravation, the lawyer had substantial experience in the practice of law. In mitigation, the lawyer had no prior disciplinary record, had no dishonest or selfish motive, was experiencing personal or emotional problems, fully cooperated with the bar, had a good character or reputation, was suffering from a physical or mental disability or impairment or substance related disorder, underwent interim rehabilitation, suffered the imposition of other penalties or sanctions, and was remorseful. Following his arrest, the lawyer voluntarily entered an inpatient treatment program

and had been sober since the date of the incident, was continuing to receive treatment, was actively involved in AA, and was working to assist others in entering recovery.

In The Florida Bar v. Jones, 2016 WL 6825816 (Fla. Nov. 17, 2016) (Unpublished Disposition), a lawyer was suspended from the practice of law for 18 months, required to contact FLA, Inc. and abide by all recommendations made by FLA, Inc., and to pay the bar's costs incurred in the matter. In his criminal matter, the lawyer entered a nolo contendere plea to one count of trespass to a structure and/or conveyance with a deadly weapon, a third-degree felony. Adjudication of guilt was withheld and he was placed on probation for two years with special conditions.

VII. 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 from the practice of law for two years, effective immediately on entry of the Supreme Court of Florida's order approving this consent judgment.
 - i. On entry of the Court's order, respondent must immediately:
 1. cease all practice of law in Florida;

2. cease holding respondent out as a Florida Bar member or lawyer and eliminate all indicia of respondent's status as a Florida Bar member or lawyer on websites, social media, telephone listings, stationery, checks, business cards, office signs, email address, and any other indicia of respondent's status as a Florida Bar member or lawyer;
 3. withdraw from representation of all clients;
 4. cease withdrawing or disbursing any money from any trust account or other financial institution account holding funds of clients or third parties in respondent's possession in connection with legal representation;
 5. not transfer any ownership of any real or personal property purchased in whole or in part with funds of clients or third parties in connection with legal representation;
 6. provide a copy of this suspension order to all courts, tribunals, or adjudicative agencies before which respondent is counsel of record; all state, federal, or administrative bars of which respondent is a member; all clients; all co-counsel; and all opposing counsel, as required by Rule 3-5.1(b); and
 7. provide a copy of this suspension order to all banks and financial institutions where respondent maintains any account holding funds of clients or third parties in respondent's possession in connection with representation.
- ii. Within 30 days from the date of the Court's order, respondent must:

1. provide the bar's headquarters office in Tallahassee with an affidavit listing all of the following that respondent notified of this suspension order: all courts, tribunals, or adjudicative agencies of which respondent is a member; all state, federal, or administrative bars of which respondent is a member; all clients; all co-counsel; all opposing counsel; and all banks and financial institutions where respondent maintains any account holding funds of clients or third parties in respondent's possession in connection with representation; and
 2. provide the bar's headquarters office in Tallahassee with an affidavit listing the receipt and location of any fees or other sums received in connection with the practice of law received by respondent after issuance of this suspension order.
- b. Respondent must fully comply with Rule Regulating The Florida Bar 3-5.1(b).
 - c. Respondent also must fully comply with Rule Regulating The Florida Bar 3-6.1, if applicable.
 - d. If respondent decides to petition for reinstatement in the future, prior to petitioning for reinstatement, respondent would be required to undergo a substance abuse evaluation and mental health evaluation by an approved Florida Lawyers Assistance, Inc. (FLA) provider, comply with any recommendations, including any recommendations that FLA, Inc. makes, and receive a recommendation from FLA, Inc. in support of her petition for reinstatement.

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

Court Reporters' Fees \$ 215.00

Investigative Costs \$ 16.47

TOTAL: \$1,481.47

I recommend that the above costs be charged to respondent and that interest accrue at the statutory rate. If respondent does not satisfy the cost judgment within 30 days of the judgment becoming final, 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 1st day of April, 2026.

/s/James A. Yancey
James A. Yancey, 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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