

THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

SUPREME COURT

ORDER

LD-2021-0004, In the Matter of Joseph B. Piper, Esquire

On June 15, 2021, the Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) filed a petition recommending the disbarment of Attorney Joseph B. Piper. The PCC also filed a record of its proceedings with this court. In accordance with Rule 37(16), the court provided notice to Attorney Piper of the PCC's disbarment recommendation and ordered him to file a response on or before July 19, 2021, identifying any legal or factual issues relating to the PCC's recommendation that he wished the court to review. Attorney Piper did not file a response.

The court has reviewed the PCC's recommendation for disbarment and the PCC record. The PCC adopted a hearing panel report, which concerned three docketed matters and which found, among other misconduct, that Attorney Piper failed to protect clients' interests in matters before the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO), failed to keep the clients apprised of developments in the PTO matters, failed to communicate with the clients, failed to take reasonable steps to protect the clients' interests after effectively having terminated representation of them, failed to provide the Attorney Discipline Office (ADO) with information that it had requested during its investigation, and otherwise failed to cooperate with the ADO during its investigation. Those facts were undisputed because Attorney Piper did not respond to the ADO's notices of charges, see Rule 37A(III)(b)(3)(A), and did not participate in the hearing before the panel. The PCC determined that Attorney Piper had violated the following Rules of Professional Conduct: Rule 1.1 (requiring competence); Rule 1.2(a) (requiring a lawyer to abide by the client's decisions concerning the objectives of representation and to consult with the client as to the means by which they are to be pursued); Rule 1.3 (requiring diligence); Rule 1.4 (requiring adequate communications with clients); Rule 1.16(d) (requiring a lawyer to protect the client's interests when withdrawing or terminating representation); Rule 8.1 (prohibiting non-compliance with ADO demands for information and with ADO hearing notices); and Rule 8.4(a) (making it misconduct to violate any of the rules). The PCC further adopted the hearing panel's conclusion that a lesser sanction was unwarranted, given the seriousness of Attorney Piper's misconduct, the injury that it caused to his clients, and the harm that it caused to the legal system and to the reputation and standing of the legal profession.

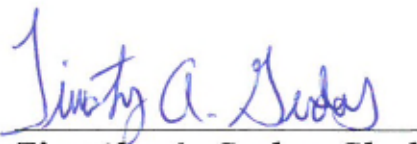
In light of the seriousness of Attorney Piper's misconduct, which includes violations of Rules of Professional Conduct 1.1, 1.2(a), 1.3, 1.4, 1.16(d), 8.1, and 8.4(a), the court concludes that disbarment is the appropriate sanction.

THEREFORE, the court orders that Joseph B. Piper be disbarred from the practice of law in New Hampshire. He is hereby assessed all costs and expenses incurred by the attorney discipline system in the investigation and prosecution of the matters.

MacDonald, C.J., and Bassett, Hantz Marconi, and Donovan, JJ., concurred.

DATE: August 17, 2021

ATTEST:


Timothy A. Gudas, Clerk

Distribution:
Professional Conduct Committee, 20-004; 20-016; 20-020
Sara S. Greene, Esquire
Joseph B. Piper, Esquire
File