

The Supreme Court of the State of Louisiana

IN RE: STACEY L. THOMAS

No. 2025-B-00926

IN RE: Disciplinary Counsel - Applicant Other; Findings and Recommendations
(Formal Charges);

September 16, 2025

Suspension imposed. See per curiam.

JLW

JDH

WJC

JBM

PDG

JMG

CRC

Supreme Court of Louisiana
September 16, 2025



Chief Deputy Clerk of Court
For the Court

SUPREME COURT OF LOUISIANA

NO. 2025-B-0926

IN RE: STACEY L. THOMAS

ATTORNEY DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDING

PER CURIAM

This disciplinary matter arises from formal charges filed by the Office of Disciplinary Counsel (“ODC”) against respondent, Stacey L. Thomas, an attorney licensed to practice law in Louisiana but currently suspended from the practice of law.

PRIOR DISCIPLINARY HISTORY

Before we address the current charges, we find it helpful to review respondent’s prior disciplinary history. Respondent was admitted to the practice of law in Louisiana in 2002.

In 2012, this court accepted a joint petition for consent discipline in which respondent stipulated she mishandled a real estate closing. For this misconduct, she was suspended from the practice of law for six months, fully deferred, subject to her successful completion of a two-year period of unsupervised probation. *In re: Thomas*, 12-1129 (La. 6/22/12), 90 So. 3d 1045.

In 2014, this court imposed reciprocal discipline on respondent for practicing law while ineligible, failing to diligently handle a matter, failing to communicate with a client, and failing to safekeep the property of clients or third parties while in Alabama. For that misconduct, respondent was suspended from the practice of law for ninety-one days, retroactive to her February 13, 2012 interim suspension imposed in Alabama. *In re: Thomas*, 13-2685 (La. 2/7/14), 132 So. 3d 1258.

Respondent has not filed the necessary affidavits and certifications with this court to be reinstated to the practice of law in Louisiana, and thus, remains suspended from the practice of law.

Against this backdrop, we now turn to consideration of the instant misconduct.

FORMAL CHARGES

In October 2023, Bruce Johnson filed a complaint against respondent with the ODC alleging that he retained respondent to handle some property claim matters, but after paying respondent \$1,500.00, respondent failed to communicate at all with Mr. Johnson or move the matter forward.

The ODC sent a copy of the complaint and request for a reply to respondent's primary and preferred registered addresses with the Louisiana State Bar Association ("LSBA"); however, that correspondence was returned as unable to forward. The ODC sent respondent an email to her registered email address, but that email was rejected, citing that the mailbox was "disabled."

The ODC sent a copy of the complaint and request for reply to respondent's secondary registered address, which respondent received in December 2023. Respondent failed to respond by the deadline provided therein.

In May 2024, the ODC was able to initiate a phone call with respondent who admitted to failing to respond to the complaint. Respondent was provided an extension to respond by June 6, 2024; however, respondent failed to timely respond until July 2, 2024. The ODC subsequently requested certain documents in support of respondent's reply. Respondent never provided those documents despite receiving multiple extensions of time to do so. Further, in that May 2024 phone call, respondent admitted to the ODC that her LSBA registered contact information was not accurate. Respondent assured the ODC that she would promptly correct that information. As of June 2025, respondent has yet to update her contact information.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS

In January 2025, the ODC filed formal charges against respondent, alleging that her conduct as set forth above violated the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct: Rules 1.1(c) (a lawyer is required to comply with all of the requirements of the Supreme Court's rules regarding annual registration, including timely notification of changes of address) and 8.1(c) (failure to cooperate with the ODC in its investigation).

Respondent failed to answer the formal charges. Accordingly, the factual allegations contained therein were deemed admitted and proven by clear and convincing evidence pursuant to Supreme Court Rule XIX, § 11(E)(3). No formal hearing was held, but the parties were given an opportunity to file with the hearing committee written arguments and documentary evidence on the issue of sanctions. Respondent filed nothing for the committee's consideration.

Hearing Committee Report

After considering the ODC's deemed admitted submission, the hearing committee acknowledged that the factual allegations set forth in the formal charges were deemed admitted. Based on those facts, the committee determined respondent violated the Rules of Professional Conduct as charged.

The committee determined respondent violated duties owed to the legal system and the legal profession. She acted knowingly, if not intentionally, causing actual harm to the disciplinary system by failing to cooperate with the investigation and failing to keep her contact information current, making it "impossible to investigate and resolve this complaint made by a member of the public." Relying on the *ABA's Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions*, the committee determined the baseline sanction is suspension.

The committee found the following aggravating factors present: a prior disciplinary record, dishonest or selfish motive, a pattern of misconduct, multiple offenses, bad faith obstruction of the disciplinary agency, refusal to acknowledge wrongful nature of conduct, and substantial experience in the practice of law (admitted 2002). The committee found no mitigating factors present.

After further considering the court's prior jurisprudence addressing similar misconduct, the committee recommended respondent be suspended from the practice of law for one year and one day. The committee also recommended that she be assessed with the costs and expenses of this proceeding.

Neither respondent nor the ODC filed an objection to the committee's report and recommendation. Therefore, pursuant to Supreme Court Rule XIX, § 11(G), the disciplinary board submitted the committee's report directly to the court for review.

DISCUSSION

Bar disciplinary matters fall within the original jurisdiction of this court. La. Const. art. V, § 5(B). Consequently, we act as triers of fact and conduct an independent review of the record to determine whether the alleged misconduct has been proven by clear and convincing evidence. *In re: Banks*, 09-1212 (La. 10/2/09), 18 So. 3d 57.

In cases in which the lawyer does not answer the formal charges, the factual allegations of those charges are deemed admitted. Supreme Court Rule XIX, § 11(E)(3). The record in this deemed admitted matter supports a finding that respondent failed to comply with annual registration requirements and failed to cooperate with the ODC. This conduct amounts to a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct as charged.

The ODC gave respondent multiple extensions and opportunities to respond to Mr. Johnson's complaint and produce relevant documents, but she failed to do so,

thereby impairing the ODC's ability to investigate the complaint. Considering respondents' prior disciplinary history and the numerous aggravating factors present, we find the committee's recommendation of a one year and one day suspension from the practice of law is appropriate. *See In re: Gray*, 17-1929 (La. 1/29/18), 234 So. 3d 65 (attorney who was previously suspended for two years was suspended for one year based on failure to cooperate with the ODC's investigation of a new complaint which arose during her original suspension).

Accordingly, we will suspend respondent from the practice of law for one year and one day.

DECREE

Upon review of the findings and recommendation of the hearing committee, and considering the record, it is ordered that Stacey L. Thomas, Louisiana Bar Roll number 27892, be suspended from the practice of law for one year and one day. All costs and expenses in the matter are assessed against respondent in accordance with Supreme Court Rule XIX, § 10.1, with legal interest to commence thirty days from the date of finality of this court's judgment until paid.