

1. Respondent is an attorney licensed to practice law in Texas and is a member of the State Bar of Texas.
2. Respondent resides in and maintains his principal place of practice in Van Zandt County, Texas.
3. On March 15, 2016, Complainant Amanda Mae Sowell (Sowell) retained Respondent in connection with a child custody matter.
4. In representing Sowell, Respondent neglected the legal matter entrusted to him.
5. Respondent failed to keep Sowell reasonably informed about the status of his case, and failed to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from Sowell.
6. Respondent failed to surrender papers and property to which Sowell was entitled.
7. Respondent was suspended from the practice of law from September 15, 2017 until October 14, 2017, and he represented Sowell throughout this period.
8. Respondent failed to notify Sowell that Respondent's license to practice law was suspended.
9. The Chief Disciplinary Counsel of the State Bar of Texas has incurred reasonable attorney's fees associated with this Disciplinary Proceeding in the amount of One Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty and no/100 Dollars (\$1,980.00).
10. The Chief Disciplinary Counsel of the State Bar of Texas has incurred direct expenses associated with this Disciplinary Proceeding in the amount of Eight Hundred Twenty-Two and no/100 Dollars (\$822.00).

Conclusions of Law

The Evidentiary Panel concludes that, based on foregoing findings of fact, the following Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct have been violated: Rules 1.01(b)(1), 1.03(a), 1.15(d), 8.04(a)(7), and 8.04(a)(10).

Sanction

The Evidentiary Panel, having found that Respondent has committed Professional Misconduct, heard and considered additional evidence regarding the appropriate sanction to be imposed against Respondent. After hearing all evidence and argument and after having considered the factors in Rule 2.18 of the Texas Rules of Disciplinary Procedure, the Evidentiary Panel finds that the proper discipline of the Respondent for each act of Professional Misconduct is a Partially Probated Suspension.

Accordingly, it is **ORDERED, ADJUDGED** and **DECREEED** that Respondent be suspended from the practice of law for a period of three (3) years, beginning October 13, 2019, and ending October 12, 2022. Respondent shall be actively suspended from the practice of law for a period of one (1) year beginning October 13, 2019, and ending October 12, 2020. The two (2) year period of probated suspension shall begin on October 13, 2020, and shall end on October 12, 2022.

Terms of Active Suspension

It is further **ORDERED** that during the term of active suspension ordered herein, or that may be imposed upon Respondent by the Board of Disciplinary Appeals as a result of a probation revocation proceeding, Respondent shall be prohibited from practicing law in Texas; holding himself out as an attorney at law; performing any legal services for others; accepting any fee directly or indirectly for legal services; appearing as counsel or in any representative capacity in any proceeding in any Texas or Federal court or before any administrative body; or holding himself out to others or using his name, in any manner, in conjunction with the words "attorney at law," "attorney," "counselor at law," or "lawyer."

It is further **ORDERED** that, on or before October 13, 2019, Respondent shall notify each of Respondent's current clients and opposing counsel in writing of this suspension.

In addition to such notification, it is further **ORDERED** Respondent shall return any files, papers, unearned monies and other property belonging to current clients in Respondent's possession to the respective clients or to another attorney at the client's request.

It is further **ORDERED** Respondent shall file with the State Bar of Texas, Chief Disciplinary Counsel's Office, P.O. Box 12487, Austin, TX 78711-2487 (1414 Colorado St., Austin, TX 78701) on or before October 13, 2019, an affidavit stating all current clients and opposing counsel have been notified of Respondent's suspension and that all files, papers, monies and other property belonging to all current clients have been returned as ordered herein.

It is further **ORDERED** Respondent shall, on or before October 13, 2019, notify in writing each and every justice of the peace, judge, magistrate, administrative judge or officer and chief justice of each and every court or tribunal in which Respondent has any matter pending of the terms of this judgment, the style and cause number of the pending matter(s), and the name, address and telephone number of the client(s) Respondent is representing.

It is further **ORDERED** Respondent shall file with the State Bar of Texas, Chief Disciplinary Counsel's Office, P.O. Box 12487, Austin, TX 78711-2487 (1414 Colorado St., Austin, TX 78701) on or before October 13, 2019, an affidavit stating Respondent has notified in writing each and every justice of the peace, judge, magistrate, and chief justice of each and every court in which Respondent has any matter pending of the terms of this

judgment, the style and cause number of the pending matter(s), and the name, address and telephone number of the client(s) Respondent is representing in Court.

It is further **ORDERED** that, on or before October 13, 2019, Respondent shall surrender his law license and permanent State Bar Card to the State Bar of Texas, Chief Disciplinary Counsel's Office, P.O. Box 12487, Austin, TX 78711-2487 (1414 Colorado St., Austin, TX 78701), to be forwarded to the Supreme Court of Texas.

Terms of Probation

It is further **ORDERED** that during all periods of suspension, Respondent shall be under the following terms and conditions:

1. Respondent shall not violate any term of this judgment.
2. Respondent shall not engage in professional misconduct as defined by Rule 1.06(W) of the Texas Rules of Disciplinary Procedure.
3. Respondent shall not violate any state or federal criminal statutes.
4. Respondent shall keep State Bar of Texas membership department notified of current mailing, residence and business addresses and telephone numbers.
5. Respondent shall comply with Minimum Continuing Legal Education requirements.
6. Respondent shall comply with Interest on Lawyers Trust Account (IOLTA) requirements.
7. Respondent shall promptly respond to any request for information from the Chief Disciplinary Counsel in connection with any investigation of any allegations of professional misconduct.
8. Respondent shall pay all reasonable and necessary attorney's fees to the State Bar of Texas in the amount of One Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty and no/100 Dollars (\$1,980.00). The payment shall be due and payable on or before October 13, 2021, and shall be made by certified or cashier's check or money order. Respondent shall forward the funds, made payable to the State Bar of Texas, to the State Bar of Texas, Chief

Disciplinary Counsel's Office, P.O. Box 12487, Austin, TX 78711-2487 (1414 Colorado St., Austin, TX 78701).

9. Respondent shall pay all direct expenses to the State Bar of Texas in the amount of Eight Hundred Twenty-Two and no/100 Dollars (\$822.00). The payment shall be due and payable on or before October 13, 2021, and shall be made by certified or cashier's check or money order. Respondent shall forward the funds, made payable to the State Bar of Texas, Chief Disciplinary Counsel's Office, P.O. Box 12487, Austin, TX 78711-2487 (1414 Colorado St., Austin, TX 78701).
10. Respondent shall make contact with the Chief Disciplinary Counsel's Offices' Compliance Monitor at 877-953-5535, ext. 1334 and Special Programs Coordinator at 877-953-5535, ext. 1323, not later than seven (7) days after receipt of a copy of this judgment to coordinate Respondent's compliance.

Probation Revocation

Upon information that Respondent has violated a term of this judgment, the Chief Disciplinary Counsel may, in addition to all other remedies available, file a motion to revoke probation pursuant to Rule 2.23 of the Texas Rules of Disciplinary Procedure with the Board of Disciplinary Appeals (BODA) and serve a copy of the motion on Respondent pursuant to Tex.R.Civ.P. 21a.

BODA shall conduct an evidentiary hearing. At the hearing, BODA shall determine by a preponderance of the evidence whether Respondent has violated any term of this Judgment. If BODA finds grounds for revocation, BODA shall enter an order revoking probation and placing Respondent on active suspension from the date of such revocation order. Respondent shall not be given credit for any term of probation served prior to revocation.

It is further **ORDERED** that any conduct on the part of Respondent which serves as the basis for a motion to revoke probation may also be brought as independent grounds for

discipline as allowed under the Texas Disciplinary Rules of Professional Conduct and Texas Rules of Disciplinary Procedure.

Attorney's Fees and Expenses

It is further **ORDERED** Respondent shall pay all reasonable and necessary attorney's fees to the State Bar of Texas in the amount of One Thousand Nine Hundred Eighty and no/100 Dollars (\$1,980.00). The payment shall be due and payable on or before October 13, 2021, and shall be made by certified or cashier's check or money order. Respondent shall forward the funds, made payable to the State Bar of Texas, to the Chief Disciplinary Counsel's Office, P.O. Box 12487, Austin, TX 78711-2487 (1414 Colorado St., Austin, TX 78701).

It is further **ORDERED** Respondent shall pay all direct expenses to the State Bar of Texas in the amount of Eight Hundred Twenty-Two and no/100 Dollars (\$822.00). The payment shall be due and payable on or before October 13, 2021, and shall be made by certified or cashier's check or money order. Respondent shall forward the funds, made payable to the State Bar of Texas, to the Chief Disciplinary Counsel's Office, P.O. Box 12487, Austin, TX 78711-2487 (1414 Colorado St., Austin, TX 78701).

It is further **ORDERED** that all amounts ordered herein are due to the misconduct of Respondent, are assessed as a part of the sanction in accordance with Rule 1.06(Z) of the Texas Rules of Disciplinary Procedure. Any amount not paid shall accrue interest at the maximum legal rate per annum until paid and the State Bar of Texas shall have all writs and other post-judgment remedies against Respondent in order to collect all unpaid amounts.

Publication

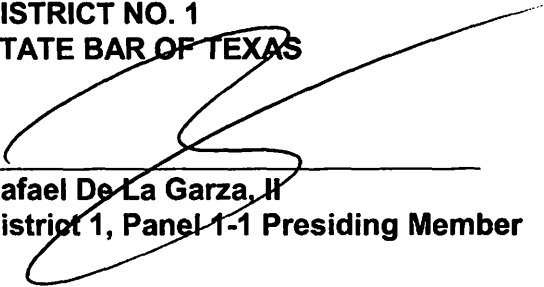
This suspension shall be made a matter of record and appropriately published in accordance with the Texas Rules of Disciplinary Procedure.

Other Relief

All requested relief not expressly granted herein is expressly DENIED.

SIGNED this 19 day of September, 2019.

**EVIDENTIARY PANEL 1-1
DISTRICT NO. 1
STATE BAR OF TEXAS**



**Rafael De La Garza, II
District 1, Panel 1-1 Presiding Member**