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VIRGINIA:

BEFORE THE FIFTH DISTRICT, SECTION III SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR

IN THE MATTER OF
ZARANA ROBINSON

VSB Docket No. 26-053-137525

SUBCOMMITTEE DETERMINATION
(PUBLIC REPRIMAND WITH TERMS)

On June 24, 2026, a meeting in this matter was held before a duly convened Fifth District, Section III Subcommittee consisting of Matthew Patrick Tsun, Esq., Chair; Kristen Lea Kugel, Esq., Member; and Charles R. Markham, Lay Member. During the meeting, the Subcommittee voted to approve an agreed disposition for a Public Reprimand with Terms pursuant to the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 13-15.B.4. The agreed disposition was entered into by the Virginia State Bar, by Elizabeth K. Shoenfeld, Senior Assistant Bar Counsel, and Zarana Robinson ("Respondent"), pro se.

WHEREFORE, the Fifth District, Section III Subcommittee of the Virginia State Bar hereby serves upon Respondent the following Public Reprimand with Terms:

I. FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Respondent is licensed to practice law in New York; however, she maintains a Virginia office where she limits her practice to immigration law. Respondent also opened Virginia Interest on Lawyer Trust Accounts ("IOLTAs") at PNC Bank and M&T Bank.

2. In October 2025, an unauthorized charge of $9.95 was charged against Respondent's PNC IOLTA. The charge was identified only as "Corporate ACH Merchant Deposit." Respondent reported the charge to the bank and learned that a second $9.95 charge had been posted.

3. Out of fear that the account was compromised, on October 9, 2025, Respondent moved all the PNC IOLTA funds, totaling $249,950, to an operating account. The memo line on the check stated "Trf IOLTA to Bus Chk."

4. Respondent subsequently learned that the $9.95 charges were from "CDGCommerce/ProPay," which was a credit card processing company that she had tried briefly but decided not to use. Respondent said that she addressed the issue with ProPay and filed a BBB complaint against them, but on November 4, 2025, ProPay attempted to charge the PNC IOLTA $9.95 again. Because Respondent had emptied the PNC IOLTA, the charge caused an overdraft.

5. On November 20, 2025, on the advice of counsel, Respondent deposited the funds back in the PNC IOLTA via cashier's check, along with $50 of her own money to cover any additional unauthorized charges.

6. The overdraft was reported to the VSB, which investigated.

7. In response to the VSB's investigation, Respondent stated that she did not regularly withdraw earned funds from her IOLTAs. Respondent kept just under $250,000 in each IOLTA to ensure that the entire balance of each would be insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation. Respondent said that 99% of the funds she held in trust were earned and that she was "behind" in paying herself earned fees.

8. For example, on January 13, 2025, Respondent withdrew $50,000 from the PNC IOLTA. A note on the check said "JAN-FEB-MAR 2025 Self and MC." She said that these were earned funds that she withdrew to "tide her over" and that they accounted for work that she had completed by the end of December 2024. She subsequently prepared a spreadsheet to show that she had earned at least $50,000 of the funds she held in trust at the time that she withdrew it.

9. On August 16, 2025, Respondent wrote a check for $120,000 drawn from her M&T IOLTA and deposited into her PNC IOLTA. The memo line stated "Trf to PNC IOLTA to keep u/250K."

10. Respondent acknowledged that she has not performed any reconciliations since at least 2023. Respondent did not maintain receipts and disbursements journals.

11. Respondent has worked with a Certified Public Accountant to reconcile the IOLTAs.

12. Prior to entering into this agreed disposition, Respondent voluntarily took 1.5 hours of Continuing Legal Education in trust accounting.

13. Respondent has no prior Virginia disciplinary record and she cooperated fully with the investigation.

II. NATURE OF MISCONDUCT

Such conduct by Respondent constitutes misconduct in violation of the following provisions of the Rules of Professional Conduct:

RULE 1.15 Safekeeping Property

(a) Depositing Funds.

. . .

(3) No funds belonging to the lawyer or law firm shall be deposited or maintained therein except as follows:

(i) funds reasonably sufficient to pay service or other charges or fees imposed by the financial institution or to maintain a required minimum balance to avoid the imposition of service fees, provided the funds deposited are no more than necessary to do so; or

(ii) funds in which two or more persons (one of whom may be the lawyer) claim an interest shall be held in the trust account until the dispute is resolved and there is an accounting and severance of their interests. Any portion finally determined to belong to the lawyer or law firm shall be withdrawn promptly from the trust account.

. . .

(c) Record-Keeping Requirements. A lawyer shall, at a minimum, maintain the following books and records demonstrating compliance with this Rule:

(1) Receipts and disbursements journals for each trust account. These journals shall include, at a minimum: identification of the client or matter; date and amount of the transaction; name of the payor or payee; manner in which the funds were received, disbursed, or transferred; and current balance. A checkbook or transaction register may be used in lieu of separate receipts and disbursements journals as long as the above information is included.

. . .

(d) Required Trust Accounting Procedures. In addition to the requirements set forth in Rule 1.15 (a) through (c), the following minimum trust accounting procedures are applicable to all trust accounts.

. . .

(3) The following reconciliations must be made monthly and approved by a lawyer in the law firm:

(i) reconciliation of the client ledger balance for each client, other person, or entity on whose behalf money is held in trust;

(ii) reconciliation of the trust account balance, adjusting the ending bank statement balance by adding any deposits not shown on the statement and subtracting any checks or disbursements not shown on the statement. This adjusted balance must equal the balance in the checkbook or transaction register; and

(iii) reconciliation of the trust account balance ((d)(3)(ii)) and the client ledger balance ((d)(3)(i)). The trust account balance must equal the client ledger balance.

By maintaining earned funds in her IOLTAs, Respondent violated Rule 1.15(a)(3).

By failing to maintain receipts and disbursements journals for her IOLTAs, Respondent violated Rule 1.15(c)(1).

By failing to reconcile her IOLTAs, Respondent violated Rule 1.15(d)(3).

III. PUBLIC REPRIMAND WITH TERMS

Accordingly, it is the decision of the Subcommittee to impose a Public Reprimand with Terms. The terms are:

1. Respondent must complete two hours of continuing legal education credits by attending courses approved by the Virginia State Bar in the subject matter of trust accounting. Respondent's Continuing Legal Education attendance obligation set forth in this paragraph will not be applied toward her Mandatory Continuing Legal Education requirement in Virginia or any other jurisdictions in which Respondent may be licensed to practice law. Respondent will certify her compliance with the terms set forth in this paragraph by delivering a fully and properly executed Virginia MCLE Board Certification of Attendance form (Form 2) to bar counsel, promptly following her attendance of each such CLE program(s).

2. Respondent must disburse all earned funds in the PNC and M&T IOLTAs, as well as any other IOLTAs that she uses, and submit a letter from her CPA certifying that she has done so.

3. Respondent must create and maintain all records required by Virginia Rule of Professional Conduct 1.15(c) and (d), and submit a letter to bar counsel certifying that she has done so.

If any of the terms are not met by November 30, 2026, pursuant to the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 13-15.F, the District Committee shall hold a hearing and Respondent shall be required to show cause why a Certification for Sanction Determination pursuant to Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 13-15.F of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia should not be imposed. Any proceeding initiated due to failure to comply with terms will be considered a new matter and an administrative fee and costs will be assessed.

Pursuant to the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 13-9.E, the Clerk of the Disciplinary System shall assess costs.

FIFTH DISTRICT, SECTION III SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR

Matthew Patrick Tsun
Subcommittee Chair

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on August 19, 2026, a true and complete copy of the foregoing Subcommittee Determination was sent to Zarana Robinson, Respondent, by certified mail and first-class mail at 1723 Fantasia Circle, Herndon, Virginia 20170-2939, and by first-class mail care of Muriel Pitney, Clerk of the Supreme Court of Virginia, PO Box 1315, 100 North 9th Street, Richmond, Virginia 23219, and by email to zrobinsonlaw@gmail.com.

Elizabeth K. Shoenfeld
Senior Assistant Bar Counsel