

VIRGINIA:

BEFORE THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR DISCIPLINARY BOARD

IN THE MATTERS OF  
JENNIFER GRACE SMYRNOS

VSB DOCKET NOS. 25-080-135275  
25-080-135649  
25-080-135816  
25-080-135822  
25-080-135913  
25-080-135916  
25-080-136022  
26-080-136321

CONSENT TO REVOCATION ORDER

On, April 16, 2026, came Jennifer Grace Smyrnos (“Respondent”) and presented to the Board an Affidavit Declaring Consent to Revocation (hereinafter “Affidavit”) of her license to practice law in the courts of this Commonwealth. By tendering her Consent to Revocation at a time when a disciplinary complaint, Investigation or Proceeding is pending, the nature of which is specifically set forth in the attached Affidavit, the Respondent acknowledges that the material facts contained in the pending disciplinary complaint, Investigation or Proceeding are true.

The Board having considered the Affidavit, and Bar Counsel having no objection, the Board accepts her Consent to Revocation.

Upon consideration whereof, it is therefore ordered that Jennifer Grace Smyrnos’ license to practice law in the courts of this Commonwealth be and the same hereby is revoked, and that the name of Jennifer Grace Smyrnos be stricken from the Roll of Attorneys of this Commonwealth.

It is further **ORDERED** that the Respondent must comply with the requirements of Part Six, Section IV, Paragraph 13-29 of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia. The Respondent shall forthwith give notice by certified mail of the Revocation of her license to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia, to all clients for whom she is currently handling matters and to all

opposing Attorneys and presiding Judges in pending litigation. The Respondent shall also make appropriate arrangements for the disposition of matters then in her care in conformity with the wishes of her clients. The Respondent shall give such notice immediately and in no event later than fourteen (14) days of the effective date of the Revocation, and make such arrangements as are required herein as soon as is practicable and in no event later than forty-five (45) days of the effective date of the Revocation. The Respondent shall also furnish proof to the Clerk of the Disciplinary System of the Virginia State Bar within sixty (60) days of the effective date of the Revocation that such notices have been timely given, and such arrangements have been made for the disposition of matters.

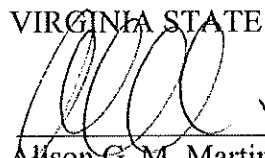
It is further **ORDERED** that if the Respondent is not handling any client matters on the effective date of the Revocation, she shall submit an affidavit to that effect within sixty 60 days of the effective date of the Revocation to the Clerk at the Virginia State Bar. The Board shall decide all issues concerning the adequacy of the notice and arrangements required herein. The burden of proof shall be on the Respondent to show compliance.

It is further **ORDERED** that pursuant to Part Six, Section IV, Paragraph 13-9.E, of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia, the Clerk shall assess all costs against the Respondent.

It is further **ORDERED** that an attested copy of this Order be mailed by the Clerk to the Respondent by electronic, first-class, and certified mail, return receipt requested to her address of record with the Virginia State Bar, being 118 Townsend Street Grass Valley, CA 95945, and a copy by electronic mail to Daniel S. Schumack, Respondent's Counsel and a copy by electronic mail to Tenley C. Seli, Assistant Bar Counsel.

ENTERED THIS 16<sup>th</sup> DAY OF APRIL, 2026

VIRGINIA STATE BAR DISCIPLINARY BOARD

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Alison G. M. Martin,  
First Vice Chair

VIRGINIA:

BEFORE THE DISCIPLINARY BOARD  
OF THE VIRGINIA STATE BAR

IN THE MATTER OF  
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VS B Docket Nos. 25-080-135275  
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AFFIDAVIT DECLARING CONSENT TO REVOCATION

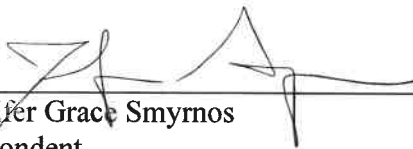
I, Jennifer Grace Smyrnos, after being duly sworn, state as follows:

1. I was licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia in October 2012.
2. I submit this Affidavit Declaring Consent to Revocation pursuant to Part 6, Section IV, Paragraph 13-28 of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia.
3. My consent to revocation is freely and voluntarily rendered. I am not being subjected to coercion or duress. I am fully aware of the implications of consenting to the revocation of my license to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
4. I am aware that there are multiple bar complaints against me as set forth in the Certifications issued on September 2, 2025 and March 23, 2026 in the above-styled matters. I admit that to the facts and misconduct set forth in the attached Stipulations of Facts and to the Nature of Misconduct attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference, to include violations of Rules of Professional Conduct 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.15, 1.16, 8.1 and 8.4.
5. I acknowledge that the material facts upon which the allegations of misconduct

are predicated are true as set forth in the attached Stipulations of Facts and to the Nature of Misconduct.

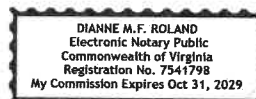
6. I submit this Affidavit and consent to the revocation of my license to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia because I know that if the disciplinary proceedings based on the alleged misconduct were brought or prosecuted to a conclusion, I could not successfully defend them.


Executed and dated on 04/16/2026.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jennifer Grace Smyrnos  
Respondent

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
CITY/COUNTY OF Richmond, VA, to wit:

The foregoing Affidavit Declaring Consent to Revocation was subscribed and sworn to before me by Jennifer Grace Smyrnos on April 16, 2026.



 Digitally signed by Dianne Roland  
Date: 2026.04.16 16:59:56 -04'00'

\_\_\_\_\_  
Notary Public

My Commission expires: October 31, 2029.

VIRGINIA:

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I. STIPULATIONS OF FACT

1. Respondent was admitted to the Virginia State Bar in 2012. At all relevant times, Respondent was licensed to practice law in the Commonwealth of Virginia.
2. Respondent maintained and was the only signatory on an Interest on Lawyers Trust Account at Wells Fargo (“Wells Fargo IOLTA”).

**Abandonment of Law Practice**

3. In March 2025, Respondent determined that she could no longer represent or “maintain direct communication” with her clients after a “prolonged period of exhaustion and deteriorating health.”
4. At that time, Respondent was a solo practitioner in Roanoke specializing in immigration law. Respondent had at least 300 active clients.
5. Respondent closed her office and traveled internationally from March through June 2025. Respondent did not notify her clients that she would be unavailable to handle their immigration matters.
6. By emails dated April 11, 2025 and April 12, 2025, Respondent notified the VSB that she was “physically and functionally unable to continue operations” of Grace Immigration “effective immediately” because she was under “severe financial and logistical duress.” Respondent stated:
  - She was unable to “address the ongoing needs of 100+ clients” with “long-pending” cases.
  - She was unable to access her office, mail delivered to her office or the Wells Fargo IOLTA.

- She formally requested the VSB “assign a designated point of contact” to assist with closure and administration of Grace Immigration.
7. By email dated April 12, 2025, Respondent advised the VSB that “the operations of **my law firm remain suspended and incapable of continuing**. No staff, family member, or attorney is available or positioned to assume management of the caseload or client files. My trust and operating accounts are inaccessible due to my overseas location and lack of checkbook access.” Respondent notified the VSB that “[s]hould no action be taken in light of this updated information, I will be directing client inquiries, refund requests, and file access concerns to your office through an auto-response system, beginning shortly. **Clients deserve clarity. If the Bar declines to act to protect their interests, then the Bar will be named as the contact point for resolution.**”
  8. On April 24, 2025, Catherine M. O’Connell, Disciplinary Counsel with the Executive Office for Immigration Review at the United States Department of Justice, advised the VSB that Respondent represented clients with 24 matters pending before the immigration court and 11 pending appeals.
  9. On April 25, 2025, Amy S. Paulick, Disciplinary Counsel with the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (“USCIS”), advised the VSB that Respondent had four active cases with the Arlington Asylum Office and 108 active cases involving “all other applications for immigration benefits with USCIS (ranging from work permits, to citizenship, to green cards, etc.)”
  10. Deborah Cahoon (“Cahoon”) is the office manager at Mill Mountain Dentistry, which rents office space in the same building where Respondent maintained an office. Cahoon notified the VSB that from mid-May 2025 through June 26, 2025, she spoke with at least seven of Respondent’s clients when they attempted to contact Respondent at her closed office. Cahoon reported that the clients advised her that Respondent did not respond to their communications or that Respondent had not returned unearned legal fees and/or client files to them upon her closure of Grace Immigration.
  11. Maria Jimenez Luna (“Luna”) previously worked for Respondent. Luna reported that at least ten clients contacted her because Respondent did not complete the legal work they paid for and the clients could not reach Respondent about their cases. Luna reported to the VSB that AZR and JHM, Respondent’s former clients, filed lawsuits in the City of Roanoke General District Court because Respondent abandoned their cases just before their final hearings. The court awarded \$9,500 to AZR and \$2,500 to JHM as refunds of unearned legal fees.
  12. On May 4, 2025, a Google search for “Grace Immigration PLLC” revealed that Respondent’s law practice was “[t]emporarily closed.”
  13. On May 22, 2025, the VSB received an automatic reply email from Respondent that stated:

Grace Immigration PLLC is permanently closed, and I am no longer practicing law. I will not be taking on any new cases or providing legal services moving forward. For assistance with your immigration matter or to find another attorney, please contact the Virginia State Bar at [www.vsb.org](http://www.vsb.org) or (804) 775-0500.

14. On June 17, 2025, JDR Enterprises LLC, Respondent's office landlord, filed an unlawful detainer action against Respondent in Roanoke County General District Court. The Court continued hearings scheduled for July 16, 2025 and July 23, 2025.

**Client MNPH**  
**VSB Docket No. 25-080-135275**

15. In 2019, MNPH hired Respondent to represent her on an Application for Asylum and for Withholding Removal before USCIS. MNPH paid a flat fee in the amount of \$7,000.
16. In 2024, Respondent sent MNPH a letter stating that she could no longer represent her for personal reasons. Upon receipt of the letter, MNPH called Respondent several times, however, Respondent did not respond to her calls.
17. Respondent did not return MNPH's client file or any unearned advanced legal fees after failing to complete the representation. Respondent did not provide MNPH with an accounting of the legal work performed on her case.
18. Respondent failed to file a motion to withdraw as MNPH's counsel with the United States Department of Justice, Executive Office for Immigration Review, Sterling Immigration Court ("Immigration Court") where MNPH's asylum application was pending.
19. On August 21, 2024 and January 22, 2025, Respondent failed to appear before the Immigration Court for master calendar hearings on MNPH's case. Respondent did not inform her client, the Immigration Court or opposing counsel that she would not be present at the hearings.
20. On January 23, 2025, the Immigration Court issued an Order that required Respondent to provide a written explanation, by February 10, 2025, regarding her failure to appear at the August 21, 2024 and January 22, 2025 hearings; to appear at a hearing on May 14, 2025; and to file any motion to withdraw by April 14, 2025.
21. Respondent did not provide a written explanation by February 10, 2025; did not appear at the May 14, 2025 hearing; and did not file a motion to withdraw. Upon Respondent's failure to adhere with the January 23, 2025 order, the Immigration Court continued MNPH's case until 2026 so she had time to retain new counsel.
22. Respondent had not communicated with MNPH since 2024.

**Client TSM**  
**VS B Docket No. 25-080-135275**

23. In 2022, TSM hired Respondent to assist her in filing applications for lawful Permanent Residency (a “green card”) and citizenship.
24. Respondent and TSM had a written fee agreement that stated TSM retained Respondent on a “U.S. Permanent Residency – Marriage-Based Adjustment of Status, 245(i)(3 years)” for a fixed fee of \$4,500 plus costs. The fee agreement stated that the “legal representation” was for three years, and if the immigration matter took more than three years, “there will be an extra cost for continued representation.”
25. TSM advised the VSB that she had to complete paperwork for Respondent three times because Respondent kept misplacing it. Respondent eventually filed the petition with the USCIS.
26. In May 2024, TSM received her green card.
27. TSM advised the VSB that she thought “she was still under contract” with Respondent because the fee agreement stated that Respondent would represent her for three years.
28. In March 2025, TSM sent an email to Respondent about her eligibility for Free Application for Federal Student Aid (“FAFSA”).
29. Respondent replied by email and informed TSM that she could not give her legal advice.
30. On May 22, 2025, TSM advised the VSB that she sent Grace Immigration a message and received a response that reflected Respondent’s law practice was “permanently closed.”
31. Respondent did not notify TSM that she was closing her legal practice and would not perform the legal work on her citizenship petition.

**Client MAL**  
**VS B Docket No. 25-080-135275**

32. In 2017, MAL hired Respondent in a “deportation removal procedure.” MAL told the VSB that he paid Respondent at least \$10,000 during the representation.
33. A hearing in MAL’s matter was initially scheduled for July 26, 2023, however, Respondent continued the matter to April 9, 2024.
34. Two weeks before the April 9, 2024 hearing, MAL received a letter, dated March 20, 2024, from Respondent, which advised MAL that Respondent could no longer represent him “due to an unforeseen emergency situation” in her personal circumstances.

35. Respondent did not file a motion to withdraw as counsel with the immigration court or appear at the April 9, 2024 hearing in MAL's matter.
36. In March or April 2025, Respondent advised MAL, by text message, that his work permit was delivered to her office.
37. After receipt of Respondent's text message, MAL and TL, MAL's wife, repeatedly called Respondent's office about his work permit. Respondent did not return their calls.
38. MAL repeatedly visited Respondent's office to pick up his work permit, but the office was always closed.
39. Respondent never provided MAL with his original work permit.
40. On MAL's behalf, TL requested MAL's file from Respondent. TL advised the VSB that Respondent told her that MAL had to pay a \$200 fee to obtain his client file. Respondent never provided MAL with a copy of his file.

**Clients YFV and BORL  
VSB Docket No. 25-080-135275**

41. In August 2023, YFV and BORL and their two adult sons hired Respondent to obtain work permits and permanent residency. YFV paid Respondent \$6,000 in advanced legal fees for the representation of herself and her two adult sons. BORL paid Respondent \$1,500 in advanced legal fees.
42. Respondent completed the legal filings related to the work permits. YFV and her sons received their work permits. Respondent did not complete the legal work required to obtain permanent residency for them.
43. BORL received notification from USCIS that it mailed his work permit. BORL discovered that Respondent directed USCIS to mail the work permit to her office.
44. Respondent never delivered the original work permit to BORL, which was necessary to maintain his employment.
45. As a result of Respondent's failure to provide BORL with his work permit, BORL lost his job. YFV stated they hired a new attorney to complete the permanent residency work, which cost \$7,000 because the documents Respondent prepared were incorrect and new documents had to be generated.
46. Respondent has not refunded any unearned advanced legal fees to YFV or BORL or provided them with an accounting of the legal work performed on their cases.

**Client GVA**  
**VS B Docket No. 25-080-135275**

47. GVA hired Respondent to renew his Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (“DACA”). In February 2025, GVA paid Respondent an advanced legal fee.
48. Respondent did not complete the legal work for which she was hired.
49. GVA and his mother, TA, repeatedly attempted to communicate with Respondent, who does not answer her phone or return their telephone calls.
50. Respondent has not refunded any of GVA’s advanced legal fee or provided him with an accounting of the legal work performed on his case.

**Client GFR**  
**VS B Docket No. 25-080-135275**

51. In October or November 2024, GFR retained Respondent to represent him in an application for citizenship, including participation in his interview with USCIS. GFR advised the VS B that Respondent’s representation would end when he attained citizenship, but GFR clarified that if the matter took more than two years, he would have to pay an additional legal fee.
52. GFR paid \$1,500 in advanced legal fees and approximately \$760 in estimated costs.
53. Respondent filed GFR’s application to become a citizen with USCIS.
54. In March 2025, Respondent sent GFR an email that she would be out of the country most of March and she would contact GFR upon her return. This email was GFR’s last contact with Respondent.
55. GFR emailed Respondent and received an automatic response from Respondent that stated she was unavailable and travelling internationally to “rest and recover.”
56. GFR learned of Respondent’s closure of her law practice when he viewed Respondent’s website for Grace Immigration that stated she was no longer practicing immigration law. GFR stated that it appeared that Respondent “quit practicing law” and “abandoned” his case.
57. Respondent did not complete the legal work for which GFR hired her.
58. Respondent has not refunded any unearned advanced legal fees to GFR or provided him with an accounting of the legal work performed on his case.

**Clients GFG and MRD**  
**VS B Docket No. 25-080-135275**

59. On June 21, 2024, GFG and his wife, MRD, hired Respondent to assist them in obtaining permanent residency. Respondent charged a fixed fee of \$11,500 to represent both GFG and MRD. Pursuant to their agreement with Respondent, from June 2024 through March 2025, GFG and MRD paid Respondent \$3,200 in advanced legal fees. In April 2025, GFG and MRD stopped making telephonic payments when Respondent stopped answering her office phone.
60. Early in the representation, Respondent assisted GFG and MRD to gather the necessary paperwork. GFG and MRD sent original documents to Respondent.
61. In late February or early March 2025, Respondent sent GFG and MRD an email that instructed them to contact Grace Immigration to “redo” their paperwork.
62. GFG tried to communicate with Respondent by email. In response, GFG received an automatic reply that advised Respondent was travelling abroad to “rest and recover.”
63. Respondent did not file any paperwork with USCIS and has not completed the legal work that GFG and MRD hired her to perform.
64. Respondent has not returned the original documents to GFG and MRD.
65. Respondent has not returned any unearned advanced legal fees to GFG and MRD or provided with them an accounting of the legal work performed on their cases.

**Client GOZL**  
**VS B Docket No. 25-080-135275**

66. On August 10, 2023, GOZL retained Respondent to (1) represent her children on their asylum applications; (2) represent her sister, SL, and SL’s son in obtaining asylum; and (3) review her brother’s pending asylum petition being handled by another attorney.
67. Also on August 10, 2023, GOZL, through her sister, NCZL, signed a written fee agreement where Respondent charged a fixed fee of \$12,000 plus costs for legal representation on two “Petitions for Family, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status Removal and Prosecutorial Defense, Immigration Investigation.” The agreement stated the representation would continue for a period of four years.
68. Beginning August 10, 2023 and continuing through May 5, 2025, GOZL paid Respondent \$11,660 in advanced legal fees and costs. GOZL stopped making payments when Respondent abandoned her law practice.
69. Respondent submitted three petitions for GOZL’s minor children. The USCIS granted asylum for two of the minor children. The USCIS rejected the petition for the third child.

NCZL advised the VSB that USCIS rejected the petition because an additional fee was required, however, Respondent continued to assert that she had paid the correct amount.

70. By text message dated February 17, 2025, Respondent advised NCZL that she was working on GOZL's son's asylum application and she should receive "something" in a few weeks.
71. On May 27, 2025, NCZL sent Respondent a text message seeking an update on the case. Respondent did not reply to the message.
72. NCZL reported that Respondent "vanished." GOZL has a hearing scheduled for September 3, 2025. Although Respondent told GOZL that she would prepare for the hearing, GOZL does not believe that Respondent will appear at the hearing since Respondent closed her law practice and does not answer phone calls to her office.
73. Respondent did not notify GOZL of the closure of Grace Immigration or make any efforts to transition her to new counsel.
74. Respondent did not notify the court or opposing counsel that she was closing her practice.
75. Respondent has not filed a motion to withdraw with the Immigration Court.
76. Respondent has not returned any unearned advanced legal fees to GOZL.

**Respondent's Failure to Cooperate with the VSB  
VSB Docket No. 25-080-135275**

77. On April 17, 2025, the VSB sent a letter to Respondent at her email address of record and her address of record of 5000 Brambleton Avenue, Suite B, Roanoke, Virginia 24018. The letter advised Respondent that the VSB opened a bar investigation based on her April 11, 2025 and April 12, 2025 emails. The letter required Respondent to submit a written answer to the complaint within 21 days. The letter notified Respondent that pursuant to Rule of Professional Conduct 8.1(c), she had a "duty to comply with the bar's lawful demands for information" and that "failure to respond in a timely manner to this and other lawful demands from the bar for information about the complaint may result in the imposition of disciplinary sanctions."
78. On April 18, 2025, Respondent provided a response to the bar complaint, which stated, in part:
  - "As an attorney sworn to uphold democratic values, I cannot in good faith use my legal expertise to support a system that, in its current form, undermines the very rule of law I was trained to uphold. My decision to temporarily suspend operations reflects this, not neglect."
  - "I must question whether a disciplinary process is the most responsible route forward. I am cooperating to the maximum extent available under the

circumstances and have asked for formal review of my prior correspondence regarding associate status and temporary practice closure. Without this context, pursuing discipline may effectively eliminate my ability to ever return to legal service—despite strong evidence of responsible triage and ethical prioritization in a time of extreme systemic breakdown.”

- “This is a request for professional maturity: that the VSB not waste its limited resources investigating blame in a case that clearly calls for support, not punishment. Let’s work together to ensure clients are protected and transitioned, rather than spin this process into a destructive spiral.”

79. By email dated April 22, 2025, VSB Investigator Robert Baker (“Investigator Baker”) requested a telephone interview with Respondent on either April 30, 2025 or May 2, 2025. Investigator Baker advised Respondent that the interview was related to a VSB investigation.

80. Investigator Baker’s email prompted an automatic response from Respondent’s email address of record that stated:

Thank you for reaching out to attorney Jennifer Smyrnos and Grace Immigration. Attorney Jennifer is out of the office to rest and recover – she’s traveling internationally and will not have access to email communications. We thank you for your patience, please expect a response to your message at a later date.

81. Also on April 22, 2025, Investigator Baker called Respondent at her telephone number of record with the VSB. Respondent did not answer the call. Investigator Baker left a message with his name, telephone number and a request to speak with Respondent about the VSB’s investigation.

82. By email dated April 22, 2025, Respondent advised Investigator Baker that “May 2 works well” and “[m]y cellular access is in flux, so I’d prefer to connect via laptop or mobile app, depending on what platform you recommend.”

83. By email dated April 23, 2025, Respondent confirmed that an interview via Microsoft Teams on May 2, 2025 at 11 a.m. “works for me[.]”

84. By email dated April 27, 2023, Respondent cancelled the scheduled Teams interview with Investigator Baker. Respondent advised the VSB that she determined “it would be more appropriate to handle any investigation or review through written correspondence only.” Respondent directed the VSB to “please feel free to send me any questions you have regarding the materials I previously submitted, which outline how my circumstances have rendered the continued practice of immigration law impracticable.”

85. By email dated April 29, 2025, Respondent advised the VSB that she does not “participate in virtual interviews.” Respondent stated, “I am currently outside of the United States and cannot appear in person. Given the logistical and jurisdictional

realities, I encourage the VSB to proceed in a manner that appropriately accounts for my circumstances, or to close the matter if no further resolution is possible.”

86. By email dated April 29, 2025, Investigator Baker asked Respondent if she planned to participate in the scheduled virtual interview. Investigator Baker asked Respondent to “[p]lease let me know which method you prefer for your VSB interview on Friday, May 02, 2025.”
87. By email dated April 30, 2025, Respondent responded to Investigator Baker’s email in which she refused to participate in an interview with the VSB because “[a]t this point, I do not view this process as legitimate, and I will not contribute further to it through any live or performative interaction .... I will only respond to written communications that directly address resolution of client file obligations. All other correspondence will be disregarded. There are more important things to attend to.”
88. Respondent did not participate in the May 2, 2025 interview.
89. By email dated May 29, 2025, George Smyrnos, Respondent’s father, advised the VSB that Respondent instructed him not to assist the VSB and that:

I’m no longer available for any cooperative efforts with the Virginia State Bar. They had multiple chances to engage appropriately over six to eight weeks ago, and that time has passed. At this stage, I’m not absorbing any more time, money, or coordination [of] responsibilities—especially from abroad.

**Client CLC**  
**VS B Docket No. 25-080-135822**

90. On November 26, 2015, CLC hired Respondent to apply for asylum for him and his family.
91. Respondent charged CLC a fixed fee of \$6,000. The fee agreement did not contain any benchmarks that permitted Respondent to withdraw any part of the fixed fee before completion of the representation.
92. On December 10, 2015, Respondent sent the Form I-589, Application for Asylum and Withholding of Removal (“I-589”) to USCIS for filing. On December 21, 2015, Respondent advised CLC that she received USCIS confirmation of its receipt of the I-589.
93. Respondent represented CLC for approximately 10 years. While waiting for USCIS to schedule the asylum interview, Respondent assisted CLC and his family in filing for and renewing employment authorization documentation for which she charged additional fees and costs. Respondent’s client ledger reflects that between December 4, 2015 and August 26, 2024, CLC paid \$18,200 in legal fees.

94. Respondent did not perform any substantive work on the I-589 and the employment authorization documentation matters for CLC and his family after February 11, 2025.
95. On March 11, 2025, the post office delivered CLC's son's employment authorization documentation to Respondent's office. Respondent did not notify CLC or his son that she received the employment authorization documentation. Respondent did not provide the employment authorization documentation to CLC's son.
96. On March 20, 2025, USCIS issued a Notice of Action that scheduled the asylum interview for CLC and his family on April 8, 2025. The notice stated that if CLC and his family failed to appear for the interview without good cause, "this may result in the immediate dismissal of your asylum application or, if you are not in legal status, you may be placed in removal proceedings[.]"
97. By email dated March 24, 2025, CLC notified Respondent that he received a notice "for the Asylum Court for April 8, 2025."
98. Also on March 24, 2025, Respondent advised CLC that the notification did not "provide a reasonable amount of time to prepare" and that she would contact USCIS to cancel the interview. It was CLC's understanding that Respondent would reschedule the interview and that she continued to represent him and his family on their asylum application.
99. On March 26, 2025, CLC received a Notice of Action from USCIS that cancelled the April 8, 2025 asylum interview. Also on or about March 26, 2025, CLC received another Notice of Action that rescheduled the interview for April 8, 2025.
100. CLC took no action on the Notifications because he believed that Respondent would "handle everything."
101. On April 10, 2025, CLC received two notifications from USCIS, to include a "Failure to Appear Warning" for the failure to appear at the April 8, 2025 asylum interview. The Failure to Appear Warning advised CLC that he had to reschedule the interview within 45 days "or we may refer your asylum application to an immigration judge or dismiss it."
102. Respondent did not notify CLC that she closed her office for three months and would be unavailable to monitor the I-589 and his son's employment authorization documentation that were pending before USCIS.
103. After receipt of the April 10, 2025 Notices of Action from USCIS, CLC repeatedly tried to contact Respondent regarding the missed asylum interview, to include:
  - Calls to Respondent's office. A service answered the calls and advised CLC that Respondent no longer utilized the service.
  - Text messages to Respondent.
  - A visit to Respondent's office, which was closed.
  - Four emails to Respondent.

104. Respondent did not reply to CLC’s calls, text messages and emails.
105. On April 23, 2025, May 1, 2025 and May 12, 2025, CLC received automated email responses from Respondent that stated, in part:
- Thank you for reaching out to attorney Jennifer Smyrnos and Grace Immigration. Attorney Jennifer is out of the office to rest and recover now through April – she’s traveling internationally and will not have access to email communications. We thank you for your patience, please expect a response to your email on/about mid-April.
106. On June 2, 2025, CLC received an automated email response from Respondent that stated, in part, that Grace Immigration “has been permanently closed” since March 2025; that Respondent would not “be responding” to further inquiries; and that “[n]o alternate contact exists.”
107. Respondent did not notify CLC that she permanently closed her law practice and that she would not complete the legal work on the I-589, to include rescheduling, preparing for and attending the asylum interview with USCIS.
108. Respondent did not complete the asylum or employment authorization documentation matters that CLC and his family hired her to perform.
109. Respondent did not file a motion to withdraw from the representation of CLC and his family with USCIS. As a result, CLC’s son did not receive his employment authorization documentation, which was mailed to Respondent’s closed office.
110. As of August 26, 2024, Respondent’s client ledger for CLC reflected that only \$60 of CLC’s funds remained in the Wells Fargo IOLTA.
111. Respondent did not provide CLC with a refund of any unearned advanced legal fee.
112. On June 10, 2025 and June 11, 2025, the VSB sent letters to Respondent at her address of record of 5000 Brambleton Avenue, Suite B, Roanoke, Virginia 24018 and at her email address of record of [jennifer@gracepllc.com](mailto:jennifer@gracepllc.com). The June 11, 2025 letter provided Respondent with CLC’s bar complaint and required her to provide a written response to the complaint within 21 days. The letter notified Respondent that pursuant to Rule of Professional Conduct 8.1(c), she had a “duty to comply with the bar’s lawful demands for information” and that “failure to respond in a timely manner to this and other lawful demands from the bar for information about the complaint may result in the imposition of disciplinary sanctions.”
113. Respondent did not provide the VSB with a written response to the complaint within 21 days.

114. On June 20, 2025, the VSB served a subpoena *duces tecum* on Respondent requesting production of Respondent's entire file and trust records related to her representation of CLC on or before July 14, 2025 pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-7A.4 and ¶ 13-8.A.5 of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia.
115. On June 21, 2025, the VSB received a notification stating the June 20, 2025 email to Respondent was undeliverable at Respondent's address of record.
116. On July 1, 2025, the VSB received notice that its June 20, 2025 correspondence to Respondent, including the subpoena, was undeliverable at Respondent's address of record because Respondent moved and left no forwarding address.

**Client HH**  
**VSB Docket No. 25-080-136022**

117. In September 2015, HH hired Respondent to file an affirmative asylum application and to prepare for and attend the asylum interview with USCIS.
118. Respondent charged HH a fixed fee of \$5,000 for the representation.
119. On November 10, 2015, Respondent sent the Form I-589, Application for Asylum and Withholding of Removal ("I-589") to USCIS. On December 22, 2015, Respondent received notice from USCIS regarding its receipt of HH's I-589.
120. Respondent represented HH for approximately 10 years. While awaiting the asylum interview with USCIS, Respondent assisted HH and his family in filing for and renewing employment authorization documentation for which Respondent charged additional legal fees and costs.
121. Respondent produced a client ledger for HH, which reflected that between September 11, 2015 and September 27, 2024, Hussain paid \$12,705 in legal fees and costs.
122. HH relied upon Respondent for all legal updates and notifications regarding his I-589 pending before USCIS.
123. Respondent last communicated with HH in November 2024.
124. Respondent did not notify HH that she closed her office for the three-month period of March through June 2025. Respondent did not advise HH that she would not monitor the status of his I-589 during her absence.
125. Respondent did not notify HH that USCIS scheduled his asylum interview. Respondent did not notify HH of the date and time of the interview. As a result, HH missed the asylum interview with USCIS.

126. Respondent did not notify HH of the closure of her law practice or make any efforts to transition him to new counsel.
127. Respondent did not advise HH that she would not complete the legal work on his I-589 pending before USCIS, to include monitoring the status of the I-589, notifying him when USCIS scheduled the interview, and preparing for and attending the interview with USCIS.
128. Respondent did not file a motion to withdraw from HH's immigration matter pending before the USCIS.
129. On June 27, 2025, the VSB sent a letter to Respondent at her address of record of 5000 Brambleton Avenue, Suite B, Roanoke, Virginia 24018 and at her email address of record of [jennifer@gracepllc.com](mailto:jennifer@gracepllc.com). The letter provided Respondent with HH's bar complaint and required Respondent to provide a written response to the complaint within 21 days. The letter notified Respondent that pursuant to Rule of Professional Conduct 8.1(c), she had a "duty to comply with the bar's lawful demands for information" and that "failure to respond in a timely manner to this and other lawful demands from the bar for information about the complaint may result in the imposition of disciplinary sanctions."
130. Respondent did not provide the VSB with a written response to the complaint within 21 days.

**Client CSA**  
**VSB Docket No. 25-080-135816**

131. On November 10, 2023, CSA hired Respondent to file Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence ("I-485") for her and her two children, AS and ES.
132. Respondent charged CSA a fixed fee of \$3,000 for filing the three I-485 forms. The fee agreement did not contain any benchmarks that permitted Respondent to withdraw any part of the fixed fee before completion of the representation. Respondent also charged CSA \$1,960 per I-485 for filing fees.
133. From November 10, 2023 through January 13, 2025, CSA paid Respondent at least \$9,080 for the fixed fee and costs associated with preparing and filing the I-485 for her and her children.
134. Respondent filed an I-485 for CSA and AS with USCIS.
135. Respondent completed the legal work on AS's I-485.
136. In a February 25, 2025 text message, Respondent confirmed receipt of the completed I-485 for ES. Respondent advised CSA that ES needed to complete a medical examination to finalize the I-485. CSA reminded Respondent that they had already provided her with ES's medical examination.

137. Respondent last communicated with CSA on February 25, 2025.
138. After February 25, 2025, CSA repeatedly attempted to contact Respondent about the status of the I-485 matters for her and ES. Her efforts included:
- Multiple emails to Respondent.
  - At least four text messages to Respondent.
  - Multiple telephone calls to Respondent.
  - At least three visits to Respondent's office, however, the office was closed.
139. Respondent did not reply to any of CSA's communications.
140. Respondent performed no substantive legal work on the I-485 matters for CSA and ES after March 6, 2025.
141. Respondent did not file an I-485 for ES.
142. Respondent did not notify CSA that she closed her law practice for the three-month period from March through June 2025 and would complete and file the I-485 for ES or monitor the status of CSA's I-485 pending before USCIS.
143. Respondent did not notify CSA that she permanently closed Grace Immigration in May 2025 and would not complete and file the I-485 for ES or monitor and complete the legal work on CSA's I-485 pending before USCIS.
144. Respondent did not file a motion to withdraw as CSA's counsel with USCIS.
145. Respondent did not transition CSA and ES to new counsel. CSA retained new counsel on her own.
146. As of August 26, 2024, Respondent's client ledger for CSA reflected none of CSA's funds remained in the Wells Fargo IOLTA, even though Respondent had not completed or filed an I-485 for ES and CSA's I-485 remained pending before USCIS.
147. On November 19, 2025, Respondent advised the VSB that as of July 14, 2025, "**an unspent balance of \$1,960.00 remained in trust** associated with the filing fee not yet used for submission of [ES's] updated AOA packet."
148. Respondent did not provide CSA with a refund of any unearned advanced legal fees or costs.
149. On June 10, 2025 and June 11, 2025, the VSB sent letters to Respondent at her address of record of 5000 Brambleton Avenue, Suite B, Roanoke, Virginia 24018 and at her email address of record of [jennifer@gracepllc.com](mailto:jennifer@gracepllc.com). The June 11, 2025 letter provided Respondent with the bar complaint and required Respondent to provide a written response to the complaint within 21 days. The letter notified Respondent that pursuant to

Rule of Professional Conduct 8.1(c), she had a “duty to comply with the bar’s lawful demands for information” and that “failure to respond in a timely manner to this and other lawful demands from the bar for information about the complaint may result in the imposition of disciplinary sanctions.”

150. Respondent did not provide the VSB with a written response to the complaint within 21 days.
151. On June 20, 2025, the VSB served a subpoena *duces tecum* on Respondent requesting production of Respondent’s entire file and trust records related to her representation of CSA on or before July 14, 2025 pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-7A.4 and ¶ 13-8.A.5 of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia.
152. On June 21, 2025, the VSB received a notification stating the June 20, 2025 email to Respondent was undeliverable at Respondent’s address of record.
153. On July 16, 2025, the VSB received notice that its June 20, 2025 correspondence to Respondent, including the subpoena, was undeliverable at Respondent’s address of record because Respondent moved and left no forwarding address.
154. Respondent did not respond to the subpoena on or before July 14, 2025.

**Client SPR**  
**VSB Docket No. 25-080-135649**

155. On September 29, 2022, SPR hired Respondent to obtain Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (“SIJS”) for her minor son.
156. Respondent charged SPR a fixed fee of \$5,000 for the representation. The fee agreement did not contain any benchmarks that permitted Respondent to withdraw any part of the fixed fee before completion of the representation.
157. From October 3, 2022 to January 5, 2024, SPR paid Respondent at least \$5,000.
158. On June 18, 2024, the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court for Roanoke County entered an order that appointed SPR as the sole legal and physical custodian of her son and established his eligibility for SIJS.
159. In August 2024, Respondent filed a Form I-360, Petition for Special Immigrant (“I-360”) with USCIS for SPR’s son. On September 10, 2024, Respondent received the receipt notice from USCIS.
160. On December 5, 2024, Respondent received an I-360 approval notice from USCIS.
161. SPR believes that Respondent filed a Form I-485, Application to Register Permanent Residence or Adjust Status (“I-485”) on behalf of her son.

162. Respondent last communicated with SPR in February 2025.
163. Respondent did not perform any substantive work on SPR's son's I-485 after February 2025.
164. Respondent did not notify SPR that she closed her law practice for the three-month period of March through June 2025 and would be unavailable to monitor SPR's son's I-485 pending before USCIS.
165. For the six-month period from March 2025 through September 2025, SPR repeatedly attempted to contact Respondent about the status of her immigration matters. SPR's attempts to communicate with Respondent included:
  - At least 80 telephone calls to Respondent.
  - Multiple text messages to Respondent.
  - Three visits to Respondent's office in September 2025, however, the office was closed.
166. Respondent did not reply to SPR's many communications.
167. Respondent did not notify SPR that she closed Grace Immigration in May 2025 and would not complete the legal work on the I-485 pending before USCIS.
168. Respondent did not transition SPR or her son to new counsel. SPR hired new counsel on her own.
169. Respondent did not file a motion to withdraw from her representation of SPR's son with USCIS.
170. SPR learned that Respondent closed her law practice through a Facebook post from former clients of Respondent.
171. On SPR's behalf, Susan Blum ("Blum") called USCIS about the status of her son's I-485. USCIS advised Blum that a hearing was scheduled in four weeks. Respondent did not give SPR any notice of the hearing, and but for her friend's assistance, she and her son would have missed the hearing.
172. SPR hired new counsel to represent her son on the I-485, but the hearing had to be continued so the attorney had time to prepare.
173. As of January 5, 2024, Respondent's client ledger for SPR reflected none of SPR's funds remained in the Wells Fargo IOLTA.
174. Respondent did not provide SPR with a refund of any unearned advanced legal fee.

175. On May 27, 2025, the VSB sent a letter to Respondent at her address of record of 5000 Brambleton Avenue, Suite B, Roanoke, Virginia 24018 and at her email address of record of [jennifer@gracepllc.com](mailto:jennifer@gracepllc.com). The letter provided Respondent with the bar complaint and required Respondent to provide a written response to the complaint within 21 days. The letter notified Respondent that pursuant to Rule of Professional Conduct 8.1(c), she had a “duty to comply with the bar’s lawful demands for information” and that “failure to respond in a timely manner to this and other lawful demands from the bar for information about the complaint may result in the imposition of disciplinary sanctions.”
176. Respondent did not provide the VSB with a written response to the complaint within 21 days.
177. On May 28, 2025, the VSB served a subpoena *duces tecum* on Respondent at her address of record of 5000 Brambleton Avenue, Suite B, Roanoke, Virginia 24018 and at her email address of record of [jennifer@gracepllc.com](mailto:jennifer@gracepllc.com). The subpoena requested production of Respondent’s entire file and trust records related to her representation of SPR and her son on or before June 23, 2025 pursuant to Part 6, § IV, ¶ 13-7A.4 and ¶ 13-8.A.5 of the Rules of the Supreme Court of Virginia.
178. On May 28, 2025, the VSB received an automated message from Respondent that stated:
- This inbox is no longer accepting human interference.  
All incoming communications are tagged, tracked, and scheduled for deletion. Attempts to override this boundary will be interpreted as direct violations of sovereign digital protocol and dealt with accordingly.  
Jennfer Grace Smyrnos has exited the traditional channels of contact.  
Any further messages will be treated as breach attempts and subject to permanent data quarantine.  
**There is no forwarding address. There is no alternative route.**  
To existence systems still watching: do your jobs.  
To all others: step back. Permanently.
179. On June 16, 2025, the VSB received notice that its May 28, 2025 correspondence to Respondent, including the subpoena, was undeliverable at Respondent’s address of record.
180. Respondent did not respond to the subpoena on or before June 23, 2025.

**Client NCR**  
**VS B Docket No. 26-080-136321**

181. On or about June 26, 2024, NCR hired Respondent to prepare and file a Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative (“I-130”) with USCIS so her husband could immigrate to the United States.

182. Respondent charged NCR a fixed fee of \$2,000. The fee agreement did not contain any benchmarks that permitted Respondent to withdraw any part of the fixed fee before completion of the legal work.
183. Between July 3, 2024 and July 11, 2025, NCR paid Respondent \$2,425, which included the fixed fee and the \$675 filing fee for the I-130.
184. Respondent performed no substantive legal work on NCR's I-130 matter after February 13, 2025.
185. Respondent did not complete or file the I-130 with the USCIS.
186. Respondent did not notify NCR that she closed her law practice for the three-month period of March through June 2025 and would be unavailable to perform any legal work on the I-130 during the closure.
187. Respondent did not notify NCR that she permanently closed Grace Immigration in May 2025.
188. NCR told Investigator Baker that Respondent "just ... disappeared" and she did not know if Respondent ever completed the I-130.
189. NCR called Respondent regarding a status on her I-130, but Respondent's office number was disconnected.
190. Both NCR and her husband sent repeated emails to Respondent about the status of the I-130. Respondent did not reply to their communications.
191. In July 2025, NCR learned about the closure of Grace Immigration from its website, which stated, in part, that "Grace Immigration PLLC permanently closed in 2025. Attorney Jennifer Smyrnos is no longer providing legal consultations or case support."
192. By email dated July 16, 2025, NCR requested a refund of her advanced legal fees and costs from Respondent, stating, in part, "you are out of business online and my calls won't go through to you."
193. Respondent did not provide NCR with her client file.
194. Respondent did not provide NCR with a refund of any unearned advanced legal fee.
195. As of January 13, 2025, Respondent's client ledger for NCR reflected she only paid \$1,500; that between August 26, 2024 and November 22, 2024, Respondent withdrew \$1,250 of NCR's funds from the Wells Fargo IOLTA; and only \$250 of NCR's funds remained in the Wells Fargo IOLTA.

196. On July 30, 2025, the VSB sent a letter to Respondent at her address of record of 5000 Brambleton Avenue, Suite B, Roanoke, Virginia 24018 and at her email address of record of [jennifer@gracepllc.com](mailto:jennifer@gracepllc.com). The letter provided Respondent with NCR's bar complaint and required Respondent to provide a written response to the complaint within 21 days. The letter notified Respondent that pursuant to Rule of Professional Conduct 8.1(c), she had a "duty to comply with the bar's lawful demands for information" and that "failure to respond in a timely manner to this and other lawful demands from the bar for information about the complaint may result in the imposition of disciplinary sanctions."
197. Respondent did not provide the VSB with a written response to the complaint within 21 days.

**Client LND**  
**VS B Docket No. 25-080-135913**

198. On August 29, 2024, LND hired Respondent to represent him and his wife to prepare and file a Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative ("I-130") with USCIS so his wife could immigrate to the United States.
199. Respondent charged LND a fixed fee of \$6,000 plus a \$675 filing fee. The fee agreement did not include any benchmarks that permitted Respondent to earn any part of the fixed fee before completion of the representation.
200. From August 29, 2024 to March 29, 2025, LND paid Respondent \$3,800 toward the fixed fee.
201. Between November 22, 2024 and March 5, 2025, Respondent withdrew \$2,050 of the \$3,800 paid by LND from the Wells Fargo IOLTA.
202. By email dated August 30, 2024, Respondent informed LND that the "first step in the consular processing journey" was to file the I-130 with USCIS.
203. On February 26, 2025, Respondent advised LND that she would be out of the office and "traveling in Argentina for most of March[.]" Respondent instructed LND to set-up a meeting in April.
204. Respondent performed no substantive work on the I-130 after February 2025.
205. Beginning in April 2025, LND repeatedly contacted Respondent by email, phone and in person regarding the status of the I-130.
206. Respondent did not reply to LND.
207. On April 24, 2025, LND received an automated email response from Respondent that stated, in part, that she was "out of the office to rest and recover – she's traveling internationally and will not have access to email communications."

208. After LND lost contact with Respondent, he called USCIS, who advised him that Respondent did not file an I-130 with USCIS.
209. Respondent did not notify LND of the closure of Grace Immigration or that she would not complete the legal work on the I-130 that she was hired to perform.
210. Respondent did not provide LND with his client file.
211. Respondent did not provide LND with a refund of any unearned advanced legal fee.
212. As of March 25, 2025, Respondent's client ledger for LND reflected that only \$750 of LND's funds remained in the Wells Fargo IOLTA, even though Respondent did not complete or file the I-130 with USCIS.
213. On June 26, 2025, the VSB sent a letter to Respondent at her address of record of 5000 Brambleton Avenue, Suite B, Roanoke, Virginia 24018 and at her email address of record of [jennifer@gracepllc.com](mailto:jennifer@gracepllc.com). The letter provided Respondent with the bar complaint and required Respondent to provide a written response to the complaint within 21 days. The letter notified Respondent that pursuant to Rule of Professional Conduct 8.1(c), she had a "duty to comply with the bar's lawful demands for information" and that "failure to respond in a timely manner to this and other lawful demands from the bar for information about the complaint may result in the imposition of disciplinary sanctions."
214. Respondent did not provide the VSB with a written response to the complaint within 21 days.

**Client JGL**  
**VSF Docket No. 25-080-135916**

215. On November 21, 2024, JGL hired Respondent to represent him and his wife to file a Form I-130, Petition for Alien Relative ("I-130") with USCIS so Mrs. JGL could immigrate to the United States.
216. On November 21, 2024, Respondent and JGL entered into a written fee agreement. Respondent charged JGL a fixed fee of \$2,000 plus a \$675 filing fee. The fee agreement did not include any benchmarks that permitted Respondent to earn any part of the fixed fee before completion of the representation.
217. On November 25, 2024, JGL paid the fixed fee of \$2,000.
218. Respondent performed no substantive work on JGL's immigration matter after January 2025.
219. Respondent did not complete or file an I-130 for JGL and his wife with USCIS.

220. Respondent did not notify JGL that she closed her law practice for the three-month period of March through June 2025 and would be unavailable to perform any legal work on the I-130 during the closure.
221. Respondent did not notify JGL that she permanently closed Grace Immigration in May 2025 and would not complete the legal work on the I-130.
222. Beginning in March or April 2025, JGL attempted to contact Respondent, to include:
- Three or four visits to her office, which was always closed.
  - At least two calls to Respondent’s office. JGL stopped calling Respondent when her office number was disconnected.
223. JGL learned that Respondent closed her legal practice when he accessed her website, which included a notice that her law practice was “permanently closed.”
224. On June 4, 2025, JGL’s wife sent an email to Respondent that asked for an update on the petition for a spousal visa. Respondent did not reply.
225. When JGL could not contact Respondent about the status of the I-130, he contacted USCIS, who advised him that no I-130 had been filed.
226. Respondent did not provide JGL with his client file.
227. Respondent did not provide JGL with a refund of any unearned advanced legal fee.
228. As of December 1, 2025, Respondent’s client ledger for JGL reflected that \$1,250 of JGL’s funds remained in the Wells Fargo IOLTA, even though Respondent did not complete or file the I-130 with USCIS.
229. On June 26, 2025, the VSB sent a letter to Respondent at her address of record of 5000 Brambleton Avenue, Suite B, Roanoke, Virginia 24018 and at her email address of record of [jennifer@gracepllc.com](mailto:jennifer@gracepllc.com). The letter provided Respondent with JGL’s bar complaint and required Respondent to provide a written response to the complaint within 21 days. The letter notified Respondent that pursuant to Rule of Professional Conduct 8.1(c), she had a “duty to comply with the bar’s lawful demands for information” and that “failure to respond in a timely manner to this and other lawful demands from the bar for information about the complaint may result in the imposition of disciplinary sanctions.”
230. Respondent did not provide the VSB with a written response to the complaint within 21 days.

**Failure to Cooperate with VSB’s Investigation  
VSB Docket Nos. 25-080-135822, 25-080-136022,  
25-080-135816, 25-080-135649, 25-080-136321  
25-080-135913 and 25-080-135916**

231. By email dated August 29, 2025, Investigator Baker requested a telephone number from Respondent to schedule an interview with her. Investigator Baker advised Respondent that the interview was related to the VSB's investigation of the bar complaints filed by CLC, HH, CSA, SPR, NCR, LND and JGL.
232. Respondent refused to participate in a telephone interview and would only agree to respond to written questions submitted by Investigator Baker. Respondent asserted that medical treatment prevented her participation in a telephonic interview with the VSB.
233. By email dated September 2, 2025, Investigator Baker provided Respondent with copies of:
- The VSB's May 27, 2025 letter with a copy of SPR's bar complaint and the VSB's May 28, 2025 letter serving the subpoena *duces tecum* upon Respondent.
  - The VSB's June 10, 2025 and June 11, 2025 letters, with copies of the bar complaints filed by CLC and CSA, and the VSB's June 20, 2025 letters, with copies of the subpoenas *duces tecum* served on Respondent regarding her representation of CLC and CSA.
  - The VSB's June 27, 2025 letter with a copy of HH's bar complaint.
  - The VSB's June 26, 2025 letters, with copies of the bar complaints filed by LND and JGL.
  - The VSB's July 30, 2025 letter with a copy of NCR's bar complaint.
234. On September 9, 2025, Respondent provided Investigator Baker with incomplete responses to the bar complaints filed by CLC, HH, CSA, SPR, NCR, LND and JGL. The responses did not address the clients' assertions of abandonment. The responses did not include any information regarding the amount or type of legal fees charged to each client, the scope of work covered by the fee agreements, her failure to complete the legal work on her clients' cases or her failure to notify her clients about the closure of her law practice.
235. Between October 20, 2025 and November 8, 2025, Investigator Baker submitted written questions to Respondent in an effort to investigate the bar complaints filed by CLC, HH, CSA, SPR, NCR, LND and JGL. The questions sought detailed explanation regarding issues relevant to the complaints, including but not limited to the scope of the representations, the fee agreements, the amount and purpose of the legal fees paid by CLC, HH, CSA, SPR, NCR, LND and JGL, the legal work performed for each client, and Respondent's communication with her clients regarding the closure of her law practice. Investigator Baker also sought information regarding Respondent's Wells Fargo IOLTA, including trust account practices and documentation.

236. Between October 30, 2025 and November 29, 2025, Respondent provided incomplete responses to Investigator Baker's questions regarding the bar complaints filed by CLC, HH, CSA, SPR, NCR, LND and JGL.

### **Appointment of Receiver**

237. On July 3, 2025, pursuant to Va. Code § 54.1-3900.01 and based on Respondent's refusal to properly discharge her responsibilities to her clients due to her extended absence from her legal practice, the VSB filed a Verified Petition for Appointment of Receiver in Roanoke County Circuit Court.
238. On July 14, 2025, the Court appointed Richard D. Scott as receiver of Respondent's law practice.

## **II. NATURE OF MISCONDUCT**

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

**Clients MNPH, TSM, MAL, YFV, BORL, GVA,  
GFR, GFG, MRD and GOZL  
VSB Docket No. 25-080-135275**

*By failing to represent her clients with reasonable diligence and promptness and intentionally failing to complete the legal work for which she was hired due to her abandonment of Grace Immigration, by failing to address the ongoing needs of over 100 clients with pending cases before the Immigration Courts and USCIS, by failing to complete legal work for AZR and JHM and failing to refund unearned advanced legal fees, necessitating legal action in Roanoke City General District Court, which awarded refunds to both AZR and JHM, by failing to provide any substantive legal services to MNPH starting in 2024, to include failing to complete the work necessary to obtain the application for asylum, failing to appear at the August 21, 2024, January 22, 2025 and May 14, 2025 hearings before the Immigration Court, and by failing to notify the Court that she would not appear, by failing to provide any substantive legal work to TSM after May 2024, to include failing to complete the work to obtain permanent residency, by abandoning her representation of MAL two weeks before hearing, failing to file a motion to withdraw from MAL's case, failing to appear at the April 9, 2024 hearing, and failing to deliver MAL's original green card after it was delivered to her office, by failing to complete the representation of BORL after March 2025, to include failing to deliver the original work permit to BORL, which resulted in the loss of BORL's employment, and by failing to complete the legal work in the representation of GVA, GFR, GFG, MRD and GOZL, Respondent violated Rules 1.1, 1.3(a) and 1.3(b).*

*By failing to respond to the repeated telephone calls and/or emails from MNPH, TSM, MAL, BORL, GVA, GFG and GOZL about the status of their cases, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(a).*

*By failing to refund unearned legal fees to AZR and JHM, necessitating legal action in Roanoke City General District Court, and failing to promptly return over \$30,000 in unearned client funds held in the Wells Fargo IOLTA, Respondent violated Rule 1.15(b)(4).*

*By leaving the country to travel indefinitely without taking reasonable steps to protect her clients' interests, by abandoning her law practice without notifying at least 100 clients, to include but not limited to TSM, YFV and her sons, BORL, GVA, GFR, GFG and MRD and GOZL, who had active immigration cases pending before the Immigration Courts and USCIS, by failing to transition her clients to new counsel in over 100 immigration matters pending before the immigration courts and USCIS, to include but not limited to TSM, YFV and her sons, BORL, GVA, GFR, GFG and MRD and GOZL, by failing to file motions to withdraw with the Immigration Court and/or USCIS in the cases of MNPH, MAL, BORL and GOZL, by failing to return client files and original documents to her clients within a reasonable time, and by failing to return any unearned advanced legal fees to her clients, Respondent violated Rules 1.16(d).*

*By failing to withdraw as counsel for at least 100 clients, to include but not limited to TSM, YFV and her sons, BORL, GVA, GFR, GFG and MRD and GOZL, who had active immigration cases pending before the Immigration Courts and USCIS, when Respondent knew that she was "physically and functionally unable to continue" because she was "under severe financial and logistical duress," Respondent violated Rule 1.16(a)(1) and 1.16(c).*

*By failing to substantively respond to the VSB's multiple requests for information and failing to participate in an interview with Investigator Baker, Respondent violated Rule 8.1(c).*

*By failing to complete legal work for AZR and JHM and failing to refund unearned advanced legal fees, necessitating legal action in Roanoke City General District Court, by leaving the country to travel indefinitely without taking reasonable steps to protect her clients' interests, by abandoning her law practice without notifying at least 100 clients, who had active immigration cases pending before the Immigration Courts and USCIS, including but not limited to TSM, YFV and her sons, BORL, GVA, GFR, GFG and MRD and GOZL, and failing to appear at multiple court hearings, by closing her law practice permanently without taking the necessary actions to wind down the practice to protect her clients, including but not limited to return of client files and original documents and disbursement of over \$30,000 in client funds held in the Wells Fargo IOLTA, by abdicating her responsibility to wind up Grace Immigration, to include transitioning clients to new counsel and returning client files, original documents and over \$30,000 in client funds held in the Wells Fargo IOLTA, by instead demanding the VSB assume responsibility for Grace Immigration and appoint a receiver, even though it was Respondent's responsibility to wind up her practice and protect her clients' interests, and refusing to cooperate with the VSB's investigation into the abandonment of her legal practice, necessitating the expense of a receivership, and for failing to return over \$30,000 in client funds held in the Wells Fargo IOLTA, Respondent violated Rule 8.4(b).*

**Rule 1.1 Competence**

A lawyer shall provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.

**Rule 1.3 Diligence**

(a) A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

(b) A lawyer shall not intentionally fail to carry out a contract of employment entered into with a client for professional services, but may withdraw as permitted under Rule 1.16.

**Rule 1.4 Communication**

(a) A lawyer shall keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.

**Rule 1.15 Safekeeping Property**

(b) *Specific Duties.* – A lawyer shall:

(4) promptly pay or deliver to the client or another as requested by such person the funds, securities, or other properties in the possession of the lawyer that such person is entitled to receive[.]

**Rule 1.16 Declining or Terminating Representation**

(a) Except as stated in paragraph (c), a lawyer shall not represent a client or, where representation has commenced, shall withdraw from the representation of a client if:

(1) the representation will result in violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct or other law;

\* \* \* \*

(c) In any court proceeding, counsel of record shall not withdraw except by leave of court after compliance with notice requirements pursuant to applicable Rules of Court. In any other matter, a lawyer shall continue representation notwithstanding good cause for terminating the representation, when ordered to do so by a tribunal.

(d) Upon termination of representation, a lawyer shall take steps to the extent reasonably practicable to protect a client’s interests, such as giving reasonable notice to the client, allowing time for employment of other counsel, refunding any advance payment of fee that has not been earned and handling records as indicated in paragraph (e).

## Rule 8.1 Bar Admission and Disciplinary Matters

An applicant for admission to the bar, or a lawyer already admitted to the bar, in connection with a bar admission application, any certification required to be filed as a condition of maintaining or renewing a license to practice law, or in connection with a disciplinary matter, shall not:

\* \* \* \*

(c) fail to respond to a lawful demand for information from an admission or disciplinary authority, except that this Rule does not require disclosure of information otherwise protected by Rule 1.6; or

## Rule 8.4 Misconduct

It is professional misconduct for a lawyer to:

\* \* \* \*

(b) commit a criminal or deliberately wrongful act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness to practice law[.]

### Client CLC VSB Docket No. 25-080-135822

*By failing to perform any substantive legal work for CLC and his family after February 2025, to include failing to monitor the I-589 and the employment authorization documentation matters pending before USCIS, failing to notify CLC's son of delivery of the employment authorization documentation to her office, failing to deliver the employment authorization documentation to CLC's son or make arrangements for delivery, failing to cancel and reschedule the asylum interview for CLC and his family, and failing to prepare for and attend the asylum interview with USCIS; by abandoning her representation of CLC and his family in March 2025; by failing to file motions to withdraw as counsel for CLC and his family with USCIS; and by failing complete the legal work that CLC and his family hired her to perform, Respondent violated Virginia Rules of Professional Conduct 1.1, 1.3(a) and 1.3(b) and 8 C.F.R. § 1003.102(o) and (q).*

*By failing to respond to CLC's repeated telephone calls, emails and text messages about the asylum interview with USCIS and his son's employment authorization documentation; by advising CLC that "[n]o alternate contact exists" and to stop contacting her; and by failing to notify CLC that she closed her legal practice, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(a) and 8 C.F.R. § 1003.102(r).*

*By failing to notify CLC about the asylum interview with USCIS and the legal consequences if he missed the interview; and by failing to notify CLC of the closure of her law practice and explain that she would not complete the legal work that CLC and his family hired her to perform and that they needed to hire new counsel, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(b) and 8 C.F.R. § 1003.102(r).*

*By withdrawing CLC's fixed fee from the Wells Fargo IOLTA before she completed the legal work that CLC hired her to perform, Respondent violated Rule 1.15(b)(5).*

*By failing to withdraw as counsel for CLC and his family when her physical and mental health affected her fitness to practice law, including her ability to represent CLC and his family in their immigration matters before USCIS, Respondent violated Rule 1.16(a)(2).*

*By leaving the country for three months without taking reasonable steps to protect the legal interests of CLC and his family; by abandoning her law practice without notifying CLC and his family, who had an I-589 and an employment authorization pending before USCIS; by failing to file motions to withdraw with USCIS on CLC's I-589 and his son's employment authorization documentation; by failing to transition CLC and his family to new counsel; and by failing to return unearned legal fees to CLC, Respondent violated Rule 1.16(d).*

*By failing to provide a written response to the complaint by July 2, 2025, failing to provide a complete written response to the complaint, failing to provide a complete response to the subpoena duces tecum, and refusing to participate in an interview with Investigator Baker, which hindered the VSB's ability to thoroughly investigate Respondent's misconduct, Respondent obstructed the VSB's investigation in violation of 8.1(d).*

*By withdrawing CLC's fixed fee from the Wells Fargo IOLTA before she completed the legal work that CLC hired her to perform; by leaving the country for three months without taking reasonable steps to protect the legal interests of CLC and his family, to include monitoring the asylum application and the employment authorization documentation pending before USCIS; by abandoning the immigration matters of CLC and his family, without notice and without refunding any portion of the advanced legal fee; and by abdicating her responsibilities when closing her law practice, to include transitioning CLC and his family to new counsel and returning unearned legal fees, Respondent violated Rule 8.4(b).*

### **Rule 1.1 Competence**

A lawyer shall provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.

### **Rule 1.3 Diligence**

(a) A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

(b) A lawyer shall not intentionally fail to carry out a contract of employment entered into with a client for professional services, but may withdraw as permitted under Rule 1.16[.]

### **8 C.F.R. § 1003.102 Grounds.**

It is deemed to be in the public interest for an adjudicating official or the Board to impose disciplinary sanctions against any practitioner who falls within one or more of the categories

enumerated in this section, but these categories do not constitute the exclusive grounds for which disciplinary sanctions may be imposed in the public interest. Nothing in this regulation should be read to denigrate the practitioner's duty to represent zealously his or her client within the bounds of the law. A practitioner who falls within one of the following categories shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions in the public interest if he or she:

\* \* \* \*

- (o) Fails to provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness, and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation. Competent handling of a particular matter includes inquiry into and analysis of the factual and legal elements of the problem, and use of methods and procedures meeting the standards of competent practitioners.

\* \* \* \*

- (q) Fails to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

- (1) A practitioner's workload must be controlled and managed so that each matter can be handled competently.
- (2) A practitioner has the duty to act with reasonable promptness. This duty includes, but shall not be limited to, complying with all time and filing limitations. Duty, however, does not preclude the practitioner from agreeing to a reasonable request for a postponement that will not prejudice the practitioner's client.
- (3) A practitioner should carry through to conclusion all matters undertaken for a client, consistent with the scope of representation as previously determined by the client and practitioner, unless the client terminates the relationship or the practitioner obtains permission to withdraw in compliance with applicable rules and regulations. If a practitioner has handled a proceeding that produced a result adverse to the client and the practitioner and the client have not agreed that the practitioner will handle the matter on appeal, the practitioner must consult with the client about the client's appeal rights and the terms and conditions of possible representation on appeal[.]

**Rule 1.4 Communication**

(a) A lawyer shall keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.

(b) A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation[.]

**8 C.F.R. § 1003.102 Grounds.**

It is deemed to be in the public interest for an adjudicating official or the Board to impose disciplinary sanctions against any practitioner who falls within one or more of the categories enumerated in this section, but these categories do not constitute the exclusive grounds for which disciplinary sanctions may be imposed in the public interest. Nothing in this regulation should be read to denigrate the practitioner’s duty to represent zealously his or her client within the bounds of the law. A practitioner who falls within one of the following categories shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions in the public interest if he or she:

\* \* \* \*

- (r) Fails to maintain communication with the client throughout the duration of the client-practitioner relationship. It is the obligation of the practitioner to take reasonable steps to communicate with the client in a language that the client understands. A practitioner is only under the obligation to attempt to communicate with his or her client using addresses or phone numbers known to the practitioner. In order to properly maintain communication, the practitioner should:
  - (1) Promptly inform and consult with the client concerning any decision or circumstance with respect to which the client’s informed consent is reasonably required;
  - (2) Reasonably consult with the client about the means by which the client’s objectives are to be accomplished. Reasonable consultation with the client includes the duty to meet with the client sufficiently in advance of a hearing or other matter to ensure adequate preparation of the client’s case and compliance with applicable deadlines;
  - (3) Keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the matter, such as significant developments affecting the timing or the substance of the representation; and
  - (4) Promptly comply with reasonable requests for information, except that when a prompt response is not feasible, the practitioner, or a member of the practitioner’s staff, should acknowledge receipt of the request and advise the client when a *response* may be expected.

**Rule 1.15 Safekeeping Property**

(b) *Specific Duties.* A lawyer shall:

- (5) not disburse funds or use property of a client or a third party with a valid lien or assignment without their consent or convert funds or property of a client or third party, except as directed by a tribunal.

## **Rule 1.16 Declining or Terminating Representation**

(a) Except as stated in paragraph (c), a lawyer shall not represent a client or, where representation has commenced, shall withdraw from the representation of a client if:

(2) the lawyer's physical or mental condition materially impairs the lawyer's ability to represent the client[.]

(d) Upon termination of representation, a lawyer shall take steps to the extent reasonably practicable to protect a client's interests, such as giving reasonable notice to the client, allowing time for employment of other counsel, refunding any advance payment of fee that has not been earned and handling records as indicated in paragraph (e).

## **Rule 8.1 Bar Admission and Disciplinary Matters**

An applicant for admission to the bar, or a lawyer already admitted to the bar, in connection with a bar admission application, any certification required to be filed as a condition of maintaining or renewing a license to practice law, or in connection with a disciplinary matter, shall not:

(d) obstruct a lawful investigation by an admissions or disciplinary authority.

## **Rule 8.4 Misconduct**

It is professional misconduct for a lawyer to:

(b) commit a criminal or deliberately wrongful act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness to practice law[.]

### **Client HH VSB Docket No. 25-080-136022**

*By failing to monitor the I-589 pending before USCIS, failing to notify HH of the asylum interview scheduled with USCIS and failing to prepare HH for and attend the asylum interview with USCIS; by failing to file a motion to withdraw as counsel for HH in the immigration matter pending before USCIS; by abandoning her representation of HH in March 2025; and by failing to complete the immigration matter that HH hired her to perform, which resulted in HH missing the asylum interview scheduled by USCIS, Respondent violated Rules 1.1, 1.3(a) and 1.3(b) and 8 C.F.R. § 1003.102(o) and (q).*

*By failing to communicate with HH after November 2024 about the status of the I-589 pending before USCIS, to include notifying HH that USCIS scheduled an asylum interview; and by failing to notify HH about the closure of her law practice, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(a) and 8 C.F.R. § 1003.102(r).*

*By failing to notify HH about the closure of her office for three months and her unavailability to perform any legal work during the closure, to include monitoring the status of HH's asylum application pending before USCIS or providing him with notice of any communications from USCIS; and by failing to notify HH about the closure of her law practice and explain the legal consequences of the closure, to include her refusal to complete the immigration matter that HH hired her to perform and that he needed to hire new counsel, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(b) and 8 C.F.R. § 1003.102(r).*

*By failing to withdraw as counsel for HH when her physical and mental health affected her fitness to practice law, including her representation of HH in an immigration matter before USCIS, Respondent violated Rule 1.16(a)(2).*

*By abandoning her law practice without notifying HH, who had an I-589 pending before USCIS and which resulted in HH missing an asylum interview with USCIS; by failing to file a motion to withdraw as HH's counsel with USCIS; by failing to transition HH to new counsel; and by failing to return unearned legal fees paid by HH, Respondent violated Rule 1.16(d).*

*By failing to provide a timely and complete written response to the bar complaint, and by refusing to participate in an interview with Investigator Baker, which hindered the VSB's ability to thoroughly investigate Respondent's misconduct, Respondent obstructed the VSB's investigation in violation of Rule 8.1(d).*

*By leaving the country to travel for three months without taking reasonable steps to protect the legal interests of HH, to include failing to monitor the I-589 pending before USCIS, failing to notify HH of the asylum interview scheduled with USCIS and failing to prepare HH for and attend the asylum interview with USCIS; by abandoning HH's immigration matter, without notice; and by abdicating her responsibilities when closing her law practice, to include transitioning HH to new counsel and returning unearned legal fees, Respondent violated Rule 8.4(b).*

## **Rule 1.1 Competence**

A lawyer shall provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.

## **Rule 1.3 Diligence**

(a) A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

(b) A lawyer shall not intentionally fail to carry out a contract of employment entered into with a client for professional services, but may withdraw as permitted under Rule 1.16[.]

**8 C.F.R. § 1003.102 Grounds.**

It is deemed to be in the public interest for an adjudicating official or the Board to impose disciplinary sanctions against any practitioner who falls within one or more of the categories enumerated in this section, but these categories do not constitute the exclusive grounds for which disciplinary sanctions may be imposed in the public interest. Nothing in this regulation should be read to denigrate the practitioner’s duty to represent zealously his or her client within the bounds of the law. A practitioner who falls within one of the following categories shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions in the public interest if he or she:

\* \* \* \*

- (o) Fails to provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness, and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation. Competent handling of a particular matter includes inquiry into and analysis of the factual and legal elements of the problem, and use of methods and procedures meeting the standards of competent practitioners.

\* \* \* \*

- (q) Fails to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.
  - (1) A practitioner’s workload must be controlled and managed so that each matter can be handled competently.
  - (2) A practitioner has the duty to act with reasonable promptness. This duty includes, but shall not be limited to, complying with all time and filing limitations. Duty, however, does not preclude the practitioner from agreeing to a reasonable request for a postponement that will not prejudice the practitioner’s client.
  - (3) A practitioner should carry through to conclusion all matters undertaken for a client, consistent with the scope of representation as previously determined by the client and practitioner, unless the client terminates the relationship or the practitioner obtains permission to withdraw in compliance with applicable rules and regulations. If a practitioner has handled a proceeding that produced a result adverse to the client and the practitioner and the client have not agreed that the practitioner will handle the matter on appeal, the practitioner must consult with the client about the client’s appeal rights and the terms and conditions of possible representation on appeal[.]

**Rule 1.4 Communication**

- (a) A lawyer shall keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.
- (b) A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation[.]

## 8 C.F.R. § 1003.102 Grounds.

It is deemed to be in the public interest for an adjudicating official or the Board to impose disciplinary sanctions against any practitioner who falls within one or more of the categories enumerated in this section, but these categories do not constitute the exclusive grounds for which disciplinary sanctions may be imposed in the public interest. Nothing in this regulation should be read to denigrate the practitioner's duty to represent zealously his or her client within the bounds of the law. A practitioner who falls within one of the following categories shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions in the public interest if he or she:

\* \* \* \*

- (r) Fails to maintain communication with the client throughout the duration of the client-practitioner relationship. It is the obligation of the practitioner to take reasonable steps to communicate with the client in a language that the client understands. A practitioner is only under the obligation to attempt to communicate with his or her client using addresses or phone numbers known to the practitioner. In order to properly maintain communication, the practitioner should:
  - (1) Promptly inform and consult with the client concerning any decision or circumstance with respect to which the client's informed consent is reasonably required;
  - (2) Reasonably consult with the client about the means by which the client's objectives are to be accomplished. Reasonable consultation with the client includes the duty to meet with the client sufficiently in advance of a hearing or other matter to ensure adequate preparation of the client's case and compliance with applicable deadlines;
  - (3) Keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the matter, such as significant developments affecting the timing or the substance of the representation; and
  - (4) Promptly comply with reasonable requests for information, except that when a prompt response is not feasible, the practitioner, or a member of the practitioner's staff, should acknowledge receipt of the request and advise the client when a *response* may be expected.

### Rule 1.16 Declining or Terminating Representation

- (a) Except as stated in paragraph (c), a lawyer shall not represent a client or, where representation has commenced, shall withdraw from the representation of a client if:
  - (2) the lawyer's physical or mental condition materially impairs the lawyer's ability to represent the client[.]
- (d) Upon termination of representation, a lawyer shall take steps to the extent reasonably practicable to protect a client's interests, such as giving reasonable notice to the client, allowing

time for employment of other counsel, refunding any advance payment of fee that has not been earned and handling records as indicated in paragraph (e).

### **Rule 8.1 Bar Admission and Disciplinary Matters**

An applicant for admission to the bar, or a lawyer already admitted to the bar, in connection with a bar admission application, any certification required to be filed as a condition of maintaining or renewing a license to practice law, or in connection with a disciplinary matter, shall not:

(d) obstruct a lawful investigation by an admissions or disciplinary authority.

### **Rule 8.4 Misconduct**

It is professional misconduct for a lawyer to:

(b) commit a criminal or deliberately wrongful act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness to practice law[.]

#### **Client CSA VSB Docket No. 25-080-135816**

*By failing to perform any substantive legal work for CSA and her family after March 6, 2025, to include failing to monitor CSA's I-485 pending before USCIS and failing to complete and file the I-485 for ES with USCIS; by failing to file motions to withdraw with USCIS; and by abandoning the representation of CSA and ES before the legal work on their immigration matters was complete, Respondent violated Rules 1.1, 1.3(a) and 1.3(b) and 8 C.F.R. § 1003.102(o) and (q).*

*By failing to respond to CSA's repeated telephone calls, emails and text messages about the status of her I-485 pending before USCIS and the status of ES's I-485; and by failing to notify CSA that she closed her legal practice, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(a) and 8 C.F.R. § 1003.102(r).*

*By failing to notify CSA about the closure of her law office for three months and her unavailability to perform any legal work during the closure, to include monitoring CSA's I-485 pending before USCIS and completing and filing the I-485 for ES; by failing to notify CSA that she closed her legal practice and that she and ES needed to hire new counsel; and by failing to advise CSA that she would not complete the legal work on the I-485s for CSA and ES, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(b) and 8 C.F.R. § 1003.102(r).*

*By withdrawing CSA's fixed fee and costs from the Wells Fargo IOLTA before she completed the legal work that CSA hired her to perform and before she had expended the costs, Respondent violated Rule 1.15(b)(5).*

*By failing to withdraw as counsel for CSA when her physical and mental health affected her fitness to practice law, to include representing CSA and ES in the filing of the I-485s with USCIS, Respondent violated Rule 1.16(a)(2).*

*By abandoning her law practice without notifying CSA, whose I-485 was pending before USCIS and who was awaiting the completion and filing of an I-485 on behalf of ES; by failing to file a motion to withdraw with USCIS for CSA and failing to transition CSA to new counsel; and by failing to return unearned legal fees and costs to CSA, Respondent violated Rule 1.16(d).*

*By failing to provide a timely and complete written response to the bar complaint, and by failing to participate in an interview with Investigator Baker, which hindered the VSB's ability to thoroughly investigate Respondent's misconduct, Respondent obstructed the VSB's investigation in violation of Rule 8.1(d).*

*By withdrawing CSA's fixed fee and costs from the Wells Fargo IOLTA before she completed the legal work that CSA hired her to perform and before she had expended the costs; by leaving the country for three months without taking reasonable steps to protect the legal interests of CSA, to include monitoring the I-485 pending before USCIS; by abandoning the immigration matters of CSA and ES, without notice and without refunding the unearned portion of fees and costs; and by abdicating her responsibilities when closing her law practice, to include transitioning CSA and ES to new counsel and refunding unearned advance legal fees and costs, Respondent violated Rule 8.4(b).*

### **Rule 1.1 Competence**

A lawyer shall provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.

### **Rule 1.3 Diligence**

(a) A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

(b) A lawyer shall not intentionally fail to carry out a contract of employment entered into with a client for professional services, but may withdraw as permitted under Rule 1.16[.]

### **8 C.F.R. § 1003.102 Grounds.**

It is deemed to be in the public interest for an adjudicating official or the Board to impose disciplinary sanctions against any practitioner who falls within one or more of the categories enumerated in this section, but these categories do not constitute the exclusive grounds for which disciplinary sanctions may be imposed in the public interest. Nothing in this regulation should be read to denigrate the practitioner's duty to represent zealously his or her client within the bounds of the law. A practitioner who falls within one of the following categories shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions in the public interest if he or she:

\* \* \* \*

- (o) Fails to provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness, and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation. Competent handling of a particular matter includes inquiry into and analysis of the factual and legal elements of the problem, and use of methods and procedures meeting the standards of competent practitioners.

\* \* \* \*

- (q) Fails to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.
  - (1) A practitioner's workload must be controlled and managed so that each matter can be handled competently.
  - (2) A practitioner has the duty to act with reasonable promptness. This duty includes, but shall not be limited to, complying with all time and filing limitations. Duty, however, does not preclude the practitioner from agreeing to a reasonable request for a postponement that will not prejudice the practitioner's client.
  - (3) A practitioner should carry through to conclusion all matters undertaken for a client, consistent with the scope of representation as previously determined by the client and practitioner, unless the client terminates the relationship or the practitioner obtains permission to withdraw in compliance with applicable rules and regulations. If a practitioner has handled a proceeding that produced a result adverse to the client and the practitioner and the client have not agreed that the practitioner will handle the matter on appeal, the practitioner must consult with the client about the client's appeal rights and the terms and conditions of possible representation on appeal[.]

**Rule 1.4 Communication**

(a) A lawyer shall keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.

(b) A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation[.]

**8 C.F.R. § 1003.102 Grounds.**

It is deemed to be in the public interest for an adjudicating official or the Board to impose disciplinary sanctions against any practitioner who falls within one or more of the categories enumerated in this section, but these categories do not constitute the exclusive grounds for which disciplinary sanctions may be imposed in the public interest. Nothing in this regulation should be read to denigrate the practitioner's duty to represent zealously his or her client within the bounds of the law. A practitioner who falls within one of the following categories shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions in the public interest if he or she:

\* \* \* \*

(r) Fails to maintain communication with the client throughout the duration of the client-practitioner relationship. It is the obligation of the practitioner to take reasonable steps to communicate with the client in a language that the client understands. A practitioner is only under the obligation to attempt to communicate with his or her client using addresses or phone numbers known to the practitioner. In order to properly maintain communication, the practitioner should:

- (1) Promptly inform and consult with the client concerning any decision or circumstance with respect to which the client's informed consent is reasonably required;
- (2) Reasonably consult with the client about the means by which the client's objectives are to be accomplished. Reasonable consultation with the client includes the duty to meet with the client sufficiently in advance of a hearing or other matter to ensure adequate preparation of the client's case and compliance with applicable deadlines;
- (3) Keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the matter, such as significant developments affecting the timing or the substance of the representation; and
- (4) Promptly comply with reasonable requests for information, except that when a prompt response is not feasible, the practitioner, or a member of the practitioner's staff, should acknowledge receipt of the request and advise the client when a *response* may be expected.

### **Rule 1.15 Safekeeping Property**

(b) *Specific Duties.* A lawyer shall:

(5) not disburse funds or use property of a client or a third party with a valid lien or assignment without their consent or convert funds or property of a client or third party, except as directed by a tribunal.

### **Rule 1.16 Declining or Terminating Representation**

(a) Except as stated in paragraph (c), a lawyer shall not represent a client or, where representation has commenced, shall withdraw from the representation of a client if:

(2) the lawyer's physical or mental condition materially impairs the lawyer's ability to represent the client[.]

(d) Upon termination of representation, a lawyer shall take steps to the extent reasonably practicable to protect a client's interests, such as giving reasonable notice to the client, allowing time for employment of other counsel, refunding any advance payment of fee that has not been earned and handling records as indicated in paragraph (e).

## **Rule 8.1 Bar Admission and Disciplinary Matters**

An applicant for admission to the bar, or a lawyer already admitted to the bar, in connection with a bar admission application, any certification required to be filed as a condition of maintaining or renewing a license to practice law, or in connection with a disciplinary matter, shall not:

(d) obstruct a lawful investigation by an admissions or disciplinary authority.

## **Rule 8.4 Misconduct**

It is professional misconduct for a lawyer to:

(b) commit a criminal or deliberately wrongful act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness to practice law[.]

### **Client SPR VSB Docket No. 25-080-135649**

*By failing to perform any substantive legal work on the I-485 for SPR's son after February 2025, to include monitoring the I-485 pending before USCIS and providing SPR with notice of the hearing scheduled by USCIS; by abandoning her representation of SPR and her son in March 2025 before completing the legal work on the I-485 that SPR hired her to perform; and by failing to file a motion to withdraw with USCIS, Respondent violated Rules 1.1, 1.3(a) and 1.3(b) and 8 C.F.R. § 1003.102(o) and (q).*

*By failing to respond to SPR's repeated telephone calls, emails and text messages about her son's I-485 pending before USCIS; by failing to notify SPR about the hearing scheduled on the I-485 pending before USCIS; and by failing to notify SPR about the closure of her legal practice, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(a) and 8 C.F.R. § 1003.102(r).*

*By failing to notify SPR about the closure of her law office for three months and her unavailability to perform legal work during the closure, to include monitoring the I-485 pending before USCIS; by failing to notify SPR that she closed her legal practice and the legal impact of the closure on the I-485 pending before USCIS, to include SPR's need to hire new legal counsel; and by failing to advise SPR that she would not complete the legal work on the I-485 that Respondent was hired to perform, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(b) and 8 C.F.R. § 1003.102(r).*

*By withdrawing SPR's fixed fee from the Wells Fargo IOLTA before she completed the legal work that SPR hired her to perform, Respondent violated Rule 1.15(b)(5).*

*By failing to withdraw as counsel for SPR when her physical and mental health affected her fitness to practice law, including representation of SPR and her son in an immigration matter before USCIS, Respondent violated Rule 1.16(a)(2).*

*By abandoning her law practice without notifying SPR, whose son had an I-485 pending before USCIS; by failing to file a motion to withdraw with USCIS regarding SPR's immigration matter; by failing to transition SPR to new counsel; and by failing to return unearned legal fees to SPR, Respondent violated Rule 1.16(d).*

*By failing to provide a timely and complete written response to the bar complaint; and by failing to participate in an interview with Investigator Baker, which hindered the VSB's ability to thoroughly investigate Respondent's misconduct, Respondent obstructed the VSB's investigation in violation of Rule 8.1(d).*

*By withdrawing SPR's fixed fee from the Wells Fargo IOLTA before she completed the legal work that SPR hired her to perform; by leaving the country for three months without taking reasonable steps to protect the legal interests of SPR and her son; by abandoning the immigration matters of SPR and her son, without notice and without refunding the unearned portion of the fixed fee; and by abdicating her responsibilities when closing her law practice, to include failing to transition SPR to new counsel and failing to refund unearned advance legal fees to SPR, Respondent violated Rule 8.4(b).*

### **Rule 1.1 Competence**

A lawyer shall provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.

### **Rule 1.3 Diligence**

(a) A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

(b) A lawyer shall not intentionally fail to carry out a contract of employment entered into with a client for professional services, but may withdraw as permitted under Rule 1.16[.]

### **8 C.F.R. § 1003.102 Grounds.**

It is deemed to be in the public interest for an adjudicating official or the Board to impose disciplinary sanctions against any practitioner who falls within one or more of the categories enumerated in this section, but these categories do not constitute the exclusive grounds for which disciplinary sanctions may be imposed in the public interest. Nothing in this regulation should be read to denigrate the practitioner's duty to represent zealously his or her client within the bounds of the law. A practitioner who falls within one of the following categories shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions in the public interest if he or she:

\* \* \* \*

(o) Fails to provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness, and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation. Competent handling of a particular matter includes inquiry into and

analysis of the factual and legal elements of the problem, and use of methods and procedures meeting the standards of competent practitioners.

\* \* \* \*

- (q) Fails to act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.
  - (1) A practitioner’s workload must be controlled and managed so that each matter can be handled competently.
  - (2) A practitioner has the duty to act with reasonable promptness. This duty includes, but shall not be limited to, complying with all time and filing limitations. Duty, however, does not preclude the practitioner from agreeing to a reasonable request for a postponement that will not prejudice the practitioner’s client.
  - (3) A practitioner should carry through to conclusion all matters undertaken for a client, consistent with the scope of representation as previously determined by the client and practitioner, unless the client terminates the relationship or the practitioner obtains permission to withdraw in compliance with applicable rules and regulations. If a practitioner has handled a proceeding that produced a result adverse to the client and the practitioner and the client have not agreed that the practitioner will handle the matter on appeal, the practitioner must consult with the client about the client’s appeal rights and the terms and conditions of possible representation on appeal[.]

**Rule 1.4 Communication**

(a) A lawyer shall keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.

(b) A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation[.]

**8 C.F.R. § 1003.102 Grounds.**

It is deemed to be in the public interest for an adjudicating official or the Board to impose disciplinary sanctions against any practitioner who falls within one or more of the categories enumerated in this section, but these categories do not constitute the exclusive grounds for which disciplinary sanctions may be imposed in the public interest. Nothing in this regulation should be read to denigrate the practitioner’s duty to represent zealously his or her client within the bounds of the law. A practitioner who falls within one of the following categories shall be subject to disciplinary sanctions in the public interest if he or she:

\* \* \* \*

- (r) Fails to maintain communication with the client throughout the duration of the client-practitioner relationship. It is the obligation of the practitioner to take reasonable steps to

communicate with the client in a language that the client understands. A practitioner is only under the obligation to attempt to communicate with his or her client using addresses or phone numbers known to the practitioner. In order to properly maintain communication, the practitioner should:

- (1) Promptly inform and consult with the client concerning any decision or circumstance with respect to which the client's informed consent is reasonably required;
- (2) Reasonably consult with the client about the means by which the client's objectives are to be accomplished. Reasonable consultation with the client includes the duty to meet with the client sufficiently in advance of a hearing or other matter to ensure adequate preparation of the client's case and compliance with applicable deadlines;
- (3) Keep the client reasonably informed about the status of the matter, such as significant developments affecting the timing or the substance of the representation; and
- (4) Promptly comply with reasonable requests for information, except that when a prompt response is not feasible, the practitioner, or a member of the practitioner's staff, should acknowledge receipt of the request and advise the client when a *response* may be expected.

#### **Rule 1.15 Safekeeping Property**

(b) *Specific Duties.* A lawyer shall:

(5) not disburse funds or use property of a client or a third party with a valid lien or assignment without their consent or convert funds or property of a client or third party, except as directed by a tribunal.

#### **Rule 1.16 Declining or Terminating Representation**

(a) Except as stated in paragraph (c), a lawyer shall not represent a client or, where representation has commenced, shall withdraw from the representation of a client if:

(2) the lawyer's physical or mental condition materially impairs the lawyer's ability to represent the client[.]

(d) Upon termination of representation, a lawyer shall take steps to the extent reasonably practicable to protect a client's interests, such as giving reasonable notice to the client, allowing time for employment of other counsel, refunding any advance payment of fee that has not been earned and handling records as indicated in paragraph (e).

#### **Rule 8.1 Bar Admission and Disciplinary Matters**

An applicant for admission to the bar, or a lawyer already admitted to the bar, in connection with a bar admission application, any certification required to be filed as a condition of

maintaining or renewing a license to practice law, or in connection with a disciplinary matter, shall not:

(d) obstruct a lawful investigation by an admissions or disciplinary authority.

#### **Rule 8.4 Misconduct**

It is professional misconduct for a lawyer to:

(b) commit a criminal or deliberately wrongful act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness to practice law[.]

#### **Client NCR VSB Docket No. 26-080-136321**

*By failing to perform any substantive legal work for NCR after February 13, 2025; by failing to prepare or file an I-130 with USCIS; by abandoning her representation of NCR and her husband; and by failing to complete the legal work that NCR and her husband hired her to perform, Respondent violated Rules 1.1, 1.3(a) and 1.3(b).*

*By failing to respond to the repeated emails from NCR and her husband about the status of the I-130; by failing to notify NCR and her husband about the closure of her law office for three months; and by failing to notify NCR and her husband that she closed her legal practice, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(a).*

*By failing to notify NCR and her husband that she closed her law practice and the legal impact of the closure on their immigration matter, to include her failure to complete and file an I-130 with USCIS, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(b).*

*By withdrawing NCR's fixed fee from the Wells Fargo IOLTA before she completed the legal work that NCR hired her to perform, Respondent violated Rule 1.15(b)(5).*

*By failing to withdraw as counsel for NCR and her husband when her physical and mental health affected her fitness to practice law, including representation of NCR and her husband in the preparation and filing of an I-130 with USCIS, Respondent violated Rule 1.16(a)(2).*

*By abandoning her law practice without notifying NCR and her husband, who were relying upon her to complete and file the I-130 with USCIS; by failing to transition NCR and her husband to new counsel; and by failing to return the client file and unearned legal fees to NCR, Respondent violated Rule 1.16(d).*

*By failing to provide a timely and complete written response to the bar complaint, and by failing to participate in an interview with Investigator Baker, which hindered the VSB's ability to thoroughly investigate Respondent's misconduct, Respondent obstructed the VSB's investigation in violation of Rule 8.1(d).*

*By withdrawing NCR's fixed fee from the Wells Fargo IOLTA before she completed the legal work that NCR hired her to perform; by abandoning NCR's immigration matter, without notice and without refunding the unearned portion of the fixed fee; and by abdicating her responsibilities when closing her law practice, to include transitioning NCR and her husband to new counsel, returning their client file and returning unearned legal fees, Respondent violated Rule 8.4(b).*

### **Rule 1.1 Competence**

A lawyer shall provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.

### **Rule 1.3 Diligence**

(a) A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

(b) A lawyer shall not intentionally fail to carry out a contract of employment entered into with a client for professional services, but may withdraw as permitted under Rule 1.16[.]

### **Rule 1.4 Communication**

(a) A lawyer shall keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.

(b) A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation[.]

### **Rule 1.15 Safekeeping Property**

(b) *Specific Duties.* A lawyer shall:

(5) not disburse funds or use property of a client or a third party with a valid lien or assignment without their consent or convert funds or property of a client or third party, except as directed by a tribunal.

### **Rule 1.16 Declining or Terminating Representation**

(a) Except as stated in paragraph (c), a lawyer shall not represent a client or, where representation has commenced, shall withdraw from the representation of a client if:

(2) the lawyer's physical or mental condition materially impairs the lawyer's ability to represent the client[.]

(d) Upon termination of representation, a lawyer shall take steps to the extent reasonably practicable to protect a client's interests, such as giving reasonable notice to the client, allowing

time for employment of other counsel, refunding any advance payment of fee that has not been earned and handling records as indicated in paragraph (e).

### **Rule 8.1 Bar Admission and Disciplinary Matters**

An applicant for admission to the bar, or a lawyer already admitted to the bar, in connection with a bar admission application, any certification required to be filed as a condition of maintaining or renewing a license to practice law, or in connection with a disciplinary matter, shall not:

(d) obstruct a lawful investigation by an admissions or disciplinary authority.

### **Rule 8.4 Misconduct**

It is professional misconduct for a lawyer to:

(b) commit a criminal or deliberately wrongful act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness to practice law[.]

### **Client LND VSB Docket No. 25-080-135913**

*By failing to perform any substantive legal work for LND and his wife after February 2025, to include failure to complete and file an I-130 with USCIS; and by abandoning her representation of LND and his wife in March 2025 without completing the legal work that LND and his wife hired her to perform, Respondent violated Rules 1.1, 1.3(a) and 1.3(b).*

*By failing to respond to the repeated telephone calls and emails of LND and his wife about the status of the I-130; and by failing to notify LND and his wife that she closed her law practice without completing the legal work that they hired her to perform, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(a).*

*By failing to notify LND and his wife that she closed her law practice and the legal impact of the closure on them, to include her failure to complete and file the I-130 with USCIS and that they would need to hire new counsel, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(b).*

*By withdrawing LND's fixed fee from the Wells Fargo IOLTA before she completed the legal work that LND hired her to perform, Respondent violated Rule 1.15(b)(5).*

*By failing to withdraw as counsel for LND and his wife when her physical and mental health affected her fitness to practice law, including the representation of LND and his wife in the preparation and filing of an I-130 with USCIS, Respondent violated Rule 1.16(a)(2).*

*By abandoning her law practice without notifying LND and his wife, who were relying upon her to complete and file the I-130 with USCIS; by failing to transition LND and his wife to*

*new counsel; and by failing to return the client file and unearned legal fees to LND, Respondent violated Rule 1.16(d).*

*By failing to provide a timely and complete written response to the bar complaint, and by failing to participate in an interview with Investigator Baker, which hindered the VSB's ability to thoroughly investigate Respondent's misconduct, Respondent obstructed the VSB's investigation in violation of Rule 8.1(d).*

*By withdrawing LND's fixed fee from the Wells Fargo IOLTA before she completed the legal work that LND hired her to perform; by abandoning LND's immigration matter, without notice and without refunding the unearned portion of the advanced legal fee; and by abdicating her responsibilities when closing her law practice, to include transitioning LND and his wife to new counsel and returning the client file and unearned legal fees, Respondent violated Rule 8.4(b).*

### **Rule 1.1 Competence**

A lawyer shall provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.

### **Rule 1.3 Diligence**

(a) A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

(b) A lawyer shall not intentionally fail to carry out a contract of employment entered into with a client for professional services, but may withdraw as permitted under Rule 1.16[.]

### **Rule 1.4 Communication**

(a) A lawyer shall keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.

(b) A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation[.]

### **Rule 1.15 Safekeeping Property**

(b) *Specific Duties.* A lawyer shall:

(5) not disburse funds or use property of a client or a third party with a valid lien or assignment without their consent or convert funds or property of a client or third party, except as directed by a tribunal.

## **Rule 1.16 Declining or Terminating Representation**

(a) Except as stated in paragraph (c), a lawyer shall not represent a client or, where representation has commenced, shall withdraw from the representation of a client if:

(2) the lawyer's physical or mental condition materially impairs the lawyer's ability to represent the client[.]

(d) Upon termination of representation, a lawyer shall take steps to the extent reasonably practicable to protect a client's interests, such as giving reasonable notice to the client, allowing time for employment of other counsel, refunding any advance payment of fee that has not been earned and handling records as indicated in paragraph (e).

## **Rule 8.1 Bar Admission and Disciplinary Matters**

An applicant for admission to the bar, or a lawyer already admitted to the bar, in connection with a bar admission application, any certification required to be filed as a condition of maintaining or renewing a license to practice law, or in connection with a disciplinary matter, shall not:

(d) obstruct a lawful investigation by an admissions or disciplinary authority.

## **Rule 8.4 Misconduct**

It is professional misconduct for a lawyer to:

(b) commit a criminal or deliberately wrongful act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness to practice law[.]

### **Client JGL VSB Docket No. 25-080-135916**

*By failing to perform any substantive legal work for JGL and his wife after January 2025, to include completing and filing the I-130 with USCIS; by abandoning her representation of JGL and his wife in March 2025; and by failing to complete the legal work that JGL and his wife hired her to perform, Respondent violated Rules 1.1, 1.3(a) and 1.3(b).*

*By failing to respond to the repeated telephone calls and emails of JGL and his wife about the status of the I-130; and by failing to notify JGL and his wife that she closed her law practice, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(a).*

*By failing to notify JGL and his wife that she closed her law practice and the legal consequences of the closure, including that she would not complete and file the I-130 with USCIS and that they needed to hire new counsel, Respondent violated Rule 1.4(b).*

*By withdrawing JGL's fixed fee from the Wells Fargo IOLTA before she completed the legal work that JGL hired her to perform, Respondent violated Rule 1.15(b)(5).*

*By failing to withdraw as counsel for JGL and his wife when her physical and mental health affected her fitness to practice law, including the representation of JGL and his wife in filing an I-130 with USCIS, Respondent violated Rule 1.16(a)(2).*

*By abandoning her law practice without notifying JGL and his wife, who were relying upon her to complete and file the I-130 with USCIS; by failing to transition JGL and his wife to new counsel; and by failing to return the client file and unearned legal fees to JGL, Respondent violated Rule 1.16(d).*

*By failing to provide a timely and complete written response to the bar complaint, and by failing to participate in an interview with Investigator Baker, which hindered the VSB's ability to thoroughly investigate Respondent's misconduct, Respondent obstructed the VSB's investigation in violation of Rule 8.1(d).*

*By withdrawing JGL's fixed fee from the Wells Fargo IOLTA before she completed the legal work that JGL hired her to perform; by abandoning JGL's immigration matter, without notice and without refunding the unearned portion of the advanced legal fee; and by abdicating her responsibilities when closing her law practice, to include transitioning JGL and his wife to new counsel and returning the client file and unearned legal fees, Respondent violated Rule 8.4(b).*

## **Rule 1.1 Competence**

A lawyer shall provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.

## **Rule 1.3 Diligence**

(a) A lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

(b) A lawyer shall not intentionally fail to carry out a contract of employment entered into with a client for professional services, but may withdraw as permitted under Rule 1.16[.]

## **Rule 1.4 Communication**

(a) A lawyer shall keep a client reasonably informed about the status of a matter and promptly comply with reasonable requests for information.

(b) A lawyer shall explain a matter to the extent reasonably necessary to permit the client to make informed decisions regarding the representation[.]

### **Rule 1.15 Safekeeping Property**

(b) *Specific Duties.* A lawyer shall:

(5) not disburse funds or use property of a client or a third party with a valid lien or assignment without their consent or convert funds or property of a client or third party, except as directed by a tribunal.

### **Rule 1.16 Declining or Terminating Representation**

(a) Except as stated in paragraph (c), a lawyer shall not represent a client or, where representation has commenced, shall withdraw from the representation of a client if:

(2) the lawyer's physical or mental condition materially impairs the lawyer's ability to represent the client[.]

(d) Upon termination of representation, a lawyer shall take steps to the extent reasonably practicable to protect a client's interests, such as giving reasonable notice to the client, allowing time for employment of other counsel, refunding any advance payment of fee that has not been earned and handling records as indicated in paragraph (e).

### **Rule 8.1 Bar Admission and Disciplinary Matters**

An applicant for admission to the bar, or a lawyer already admitted to the bar, in connection with a bar admission application, any certification required to be filed as a condition of maintaining or renewing a license to practice law, or in connection with a disciplinary matter, shall not:

(d) obstruct a lawful investigation by an admissions or disciplinary authority.

### **Rule 8.4 Misconduct**

It is professional misconduct for a lawyer to:

(b) commit a criminal or deliberately wrongful act that reflects adversely on the lawyer's honesty, trustworthiness or fitness to practice law[.]