

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEVADA

IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINE OF
STEVEN SORENSON, ESQ.

No. 49635

IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINE OF
STEVEN SORENSON, ESQ.

No. 50047 ✓

FILED

NOV 01 2007

JAMETTE M. BLOOM
CLERK OF SUPREME COURT
BY *J. Coyle*
CHIEF DEPUTY CLERK

ORDER DECLINING TO IMPOSE SUSPENSION (NO. 49635) AND
ORDER DISBARRING ATTORNEY STEVEN SORENSON (NO. 50047)

These are automatic appeals from a Southern Nevada Disciplinary Board hearing panel's recommendation that attorney Steven Sorenson be suspended for six months and one day (Docket No. 49635), and its later recommendation that Sorenson be disbarred from the practice of law, based on his continued misconduct (Docket No. 50047). In reaching its ultimate recommendation of disbarment, the panel found that Sorenson deviated from professional conduct rules in the following manner: six violations of RPC 1.3 (diligence); six violations of RPC 1.4 (communication); two violations of RPC 1.15 (safekeeping property); one violation of RPC 1.16 (declining or terminating representation); one violation of RPC 3.4 (fairness to opposing party and counsel); two violations of RPC 5.5 (unauthorized practice of law); nine violations of

RPC 8.1(b) (bar admission and disciplinary matters); and one violation of RPC 8.4 (misconduct).¹ Sorenson has not contested either the suspension or disbarment recommendations.

Having reviewed the record, we conclude that clear and convincing evidence supports the panel's findings² and that disbarment is warranted. With regard to the disciplinary problems set forth in Docket No. 49635, Sorenson failed to respond to over thirty letters related to the underlying client grievances that the bar served upon him, and although Sorenson eventually answered three of the bar's formal complaints, his answers were late and failed to sufficiently address the issues raised in the complaints. At the formal disciplinary hearing, he admitted that the bar could prove by clear and convincing evidence the allegations set forth in the complaints (with the exception of two counts, which were dismissed). With regard to the complaint in Docket No. 50047, Sorenson

¹The rules governing professional conduct were substantially revised after the state bar instituted the underlying complaints against Sorenson. Although the former rules apply to some of the conduct at issue, for consistency, this memorandum references the new rules; other than renumbering, no significant changes were made to the provisions relevant to this matter.

²See SCR 105(2)(e).

failed completely to respond to the proceedings and did not participate in the formal disciplinary hearing.³

In formulating its recommendation, the panel took into consideration Sorenson's explanations, which mitigated the negative weight of his conduct; however, since his professional conduct violations were numerous and serious, and he had not responded to or cooperated with the state bar in resolving the complaints pending against him, the panel recommended disbarment. We agree that the pattern of misconduct demonstrated by the grievances, together with Sorenson's failure to respond to the bar or cooperate in the disciplinary matters, warrants disbarment.

Accordingly, the panel's recommendation of disbarment is approved in full, and Sorenson is disbarred from the practice of law in this state.⁴ Sorenson shall pay the costs of the disciplinary proceedings within thirty days of this order's date, as well as any money owed to the clients

³The record reflects that bar counsel did more than was required by both serving Sorenson personally and by certified mail, see SCR 109(1) (requiring that the formal disciplinary complaint be served by personal service or certified or registered mail to the address on file with the state bar), and that the panel was correct in proceeding on a default basis, see SCR 105(2) (providing that "[i]n the event the respondent fails to plead, the charges shall be deemed admitted").

⁴We decline to impose the panel's recommendation for a 6-month plus 1-day suspension (Docket No. 49635). The recommended suspension is moot in light of this order of disbarment.

involved in the underlying grievance matters, as found by the hearing panel. The parties shall comply with SCR 115's notice requirements.

It is so ORDERED.⁵

Maupin, C.J.

Maupin

Gibbons, J.

Gibbons

Hardesty, J.

Hardesty

Parraguirre, J.

Parraguirre

Douglas, J.

Douglas

Cherry, J.

Cherry

Saitta, J.

Saitta

cc: Jeffrey D. Albrechts, Chair, Southern Nevada Disciplinary Board
Rob W. Bare, Bar Counsel
Kimberly K. Farmer, Executive Director
Steven L. Sorenson
Perry Thompson, Admissions Office, U.S. Supreme Court

⁵This is our final disposition of this matter. Any new proceedings concerning Sorenson shall be docketed under a new docket number.