



# OFFICE OF DISCIPLINARY COUNSEL

January 21, 2020

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***VIA FIRST-CLASS REGULAR  
AND CERTIFIED MAIL NO. 9414 7266 9904 2129 2009 77***

Sonya N. Armfield, Esquire  
2 Massachusetts Avenue, N.E.  
# 1173  
Washington, D.C. 20013

***In re Sonya N. Armfield, Esquire  
D.C. Bar No. 491717  
Disciplinary Docket No. 2016-D027***

Dear Ms. Armfield:

The Office of Disciplinary Counsel has completed its investigation of this matter. We find that your conduct reflected a disregard of certain ethics standards under the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct (the Rules). We are issuing you this Informal Admonition pursuant to District of Columbia Court of Appeals Rules Governing the Bar (D.C. Bar R.) XI, §§ 3, 6, and 8.

We docketed this matter based on a complaint by a lawyer who accused you of contacting her client in a litigation without her consent. The litigation involved your client Weldon Lee Hemphill, Sr., the subject of an intervention litigation ultimately deemed incapacitated. Complainant was counsel for the ward's partner of 40 years, who sought status as his common law wife to continue caring for him in their home, irrespective of his incapacity. Complainant reports that you contacted her client, the ward's putative wife, on more than one occasion and discussed, among other things, the substance of the intervention case. The ward's putative wife retained Complainant in early May 2015; you telephoned the ward's putative wife more than two months later, on August 27, 2015, and discussed the case, including its status, your view of the case, and criticizing Complainant's representation of her. At the time, you were aware she was represented by Complainant.

You deny engaging in any ethics breaches.

We reviewed all submissions, including the detailed notes of the ward's putative wife, laying out the substance of your august 2015 conversation with her. You concede that you "did contact [the ward's putative wife] to arrange a visit to see [your] client [the ward] in the home that he shared with her." But the substance of the notes lay out in detail what was said during your conversation, which includes more discussion of the case than simply arranging a visit. You do not deny the accuracy of the notes. We conclude that you violated Rule 4.2(a), which provides:

***During the course of representing a client, a lawyer shall not communicate or cause another to communicate about the subject of the representation with a person known to be represented by another lawyer in the matter, unless the lawyer has the prior consent of the lawyer representing such other person or is authorized by law or a court order to do so.***

This letter constitutes an Informal Admonition and is the most lenient form of public discipline available. Disciplinary Counsel issues this Informal Admonition pursuant to D.C. Bar R. XI, §§ 3, 6, and 8, and it is public when issued. Attached to this letter of Informal Admonition is a statement of its effect and your right to have it vacated and have a formal hearing before a hearing committee.

If you would like to have a formal hearing, you must submit a written request to the Office of Disciplinary Counsel, with a copy to the Board on Professional Responsibility, within 14 days of the date of this letter, unless Disciplinary Counsel grants an extension of time. If you request a hearing, this Informal Admonition will be vacated, and Disciplinary Counsel will institute formal charges pursuant to D.C. Bar R. XI, § 8 (c). The case will then be assigned to a hearing committee, and a hearing will be scheduled by the Board on Professional Responsibility. D.C. Bar R. XI, § 8(d). A hearing could result in a recommendation to dismiss the charges against you or a recommendation for a finding of culpability, in which case the sanction recommended by the hearing committee is not limited to an Informal Admonition.

Very truly,

Hamilton P. Fox, III  
Disciplinary Counsel

Enclosure: Attachment to Letter of Informal Admonition

cc: Complainant (without enclosure)

HPF:TMT:adlt

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