

**ATTORNEY GRIEVANCE COMMISSION
OF MARYLAND**

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

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MARIANNE J. LEE, ESQUIRE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

July 23, 2021

Sari Karson Kurland, Esquire
211 Jersey Lane
Rockville, MD 20850

RE: BC Docket No. 2020-0500
Complainant: Lakeesha L. Hammond

Dear Ms. Kurland:

The Attorney Grievance Commission, at its meeting on July 21, 2021 approved the proposed Reprimand agreed upon by you and directed that this letter of Reprimand be administered to you.

Pursuant to Maryland Rule 19-717, the Attorney Grievance Commission of Maryland hereby reprimands Sari Kurland, Respondent, for engaging in professional misconduct that violated Maryland Rules 19-301.4, 19-301.5(c), and 19-407.

Having failed to pay her home mortgage in over a year, the complainant met with Respondent less than two weeks prior to a scheduled January 15, 2019 foreclosure sale. In their meeting, Respondent recommended that complainant file a Chapter 13 bankruptcy to stay the scheduled sale and to allow time to resolve the client's indebtedness through other means, including negotiations with her mortgage and the investigation of a potential adversary proceeding for damages against the mortgage servicing company.

Under the parties' January 2, 2019 retainer agreement, Respondent charged a flat fee for preparing and filing the Chapter 13 bankruptcy petition, but stated that additional services would be charged at her firm's normal hourly rates. Although Respondent contemplated a "hybrid" arrangement in which she may also be paid a percentage of any damages recovered in a future adversary proceeding, this contingency was not reduced to writing as required by Rule 19-301.5(c).

With Respondent's assistance, the complainant was able to sell the property in a short sale on June 11, 2019. Respondent negotiated the mortgagee's

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waiver of the remaining deficiency and the bankruptcy case was dismissed without the need for an adversary proceeding. During the six-month course of representation, the complainant paid the sum of \$2,000.00 per month, which was deposited into an interest-bearing escrow account. Respondent failed to issue invoices in a timely or regular manner and failed to maintain proper records of escrow transactions as would ordinarily be required of attorney trust accounts under Rule 19-407. Respondent ultimately fulfilled the complainant's request for a refund of all fees incurred beyond the flat fee charges.

The above described conduct violated Maryland Rules 19-301.4, 19-301.5(c), and 19-407. The Attorney Grievance Commission reprimands Respondent for these violations.

The Maryland Rules provide that a reprimand constitutes discipline which is public and open to inspection. Bar Counsel will be providing a copy of this letter to the Complainant.

Sincerely,



Marianne J. Lee
Executive Secretary

MJL/sg

cc: Irwin R. Kramer, Esquire
Michael W. Blow, Jr., Esquire

CERTIFIED – RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED