

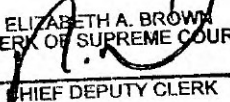
IN THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF NEVADA

IN THE MATTER OF DISCIPLINE OF  
KELLY DUFORD WILLIAMS, BAR NO.  
12657.

No. 87757

**FILED**

APR 26 2024

ELIZABETH A. BROWN  
CLERK OF SUPREME COURT  
BY  CHIEF DEPUTY CLERK

*ORDER IMPOSING RECIPROCAL DISCIPLINE  
AND DISBARRING ATTORNEY*

This is a petition to reciprocally discipline attorney Kelly Duford Williams pursuant to SCR 114. Williams has been disbarred from the practice of law in California. Williams did not self-report the California discipline as required by SCR 114(1) and did not respond to the State Bar's petition for reciprocal discipline. Williams is currently administratively suspended from the practice of law in Nevada.

Williams failed to safekeep funds, wrongfully withheld and misappropriated over \$40,000 in client settlement funds, and failed to provide an accounting when requested for two separate clients. Williams also assisted an employee in the unauthorized practice of law and filed a false police report that a young child was in danger. Finally, Williams failed to meaningfully respond to the California State Bar's letters investigating grievances regarding the above-listed misconduct, including a letter of complaint from a judge. These actions violated (1) California Business and Professions Code (CBPC) § 6106 (moral turpitude – misappropriation and issuance of NSF checks), which is similar to RPC 1.15 (safekeeping property); (2) CBPC 6068(i) (failure to cooperate in State Bar investigation), which is similar to RPC 8.1(b) (bar admission and disciplinary matters); (3)

California Rule of Professional Conduct (CRPC) 1.15(a), (d)(4), and (d)(7) (safekeeping funds and property of clients and other persons), which are the equivalent of RPC 1.15 (safekeeping property); (4) CRPC 5.5(a)(2) (aiding the unauthorized practice of law), which is the equivalent of RPC 5.5(a)(2) (aiding the unauthorized practice of law); (5) CRPC 8.4(a) (knowingly assisting a violation of the rules), which is the equivalent of RPC 8.4(a) (assisting another in violating the RPCs); and (6) CRPC 8.4(b) (criminal act of dishonesty), which is the equivalent of RPC 8.4(b) (criminal act that reflects adversely on fitness as a lawyer). As a result of these violations, the California Supreme Court entered an order disbarring Williams.

This court must impose identical reciprocal discipline unless the attorney demonstrates or this court determines that (1) the other jurisdiction failed to provide adequate notice, (2) the other jurisdiction imposed discipline despite a lack of proof of misconduct, (3) the established misconduct warrants substantially different discipline in this jurisdiction, or (4) the established misconduct does not constitute misconduct under Nevada's professional conduct rules. SCR 114(4). We conclude that none of the exceptions apply.

Based on the third exception in SCR 114(4), we have on occasion declined to impose disbarment as reciprocal discipline when disbarment in the other jurisdiction is not permanent. We are convinced, however, that Williams' misconduct does not warrant substantially different discipline even though disbarment in Nevada is permanent. In particular, Williams' misconduct displays a pattern of dishonesty that makes disbarment an appropriate sanction. See *Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions, Compendium of Professional Responsibility Rules and Standards*, Standard 4.11 (Am. Bar Ass'n 2023) ("Disbarment is generally appropriate when a

lawyer knowingly converts client property and causes injury or potential injury to a client."); *id.*, Standard 5.11(b) (providing that disbarment is generally appropriate when "a lawyer engages in any other intentional conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation that seriously reflects on the lawyer's fitness to practice"). That pattern of dishonesty continued during the California bar proceedings when Williams created and presented a falsified document to impeach a witness.

Accordingly, we grant the petition for reciprocal discipline and hereby disbar Kelly Duford Williams from the practice of law in Nevada. The parties shall comply with SCR 115 and SCR 121.1.

It is so ORDERED.

Cadish, C.J.  
Cadish

Stiglich, J.  
Stiglich

Pickering, J.  
Pickering

Herndon, J.  
Herndon

Lee, J.  
Lee

Parraguirre, J.  
Parraguirre

Bell, J.  
Bell

cc: Bar Counsel, State Bar of Nevada  
Kelly E. Williams  
Executive Director, State Bar of Nevada  
Admissions Office, U.S. Supreme Court