

NOTICE OF REVOCATION AND SUSPENSION

Case Nos. 98-34-GA; 98-85-JC

Claude R. Thomas, P-26610, Lansing, Michigan, by Attorney Discipline Board Ingham County Hearing Panel #5.

- 1) Revocation (Case No. 98-85-JC);
- 2) Suspension - 180 Days (Case No. 98-34-GA);
- 3) Both effective May 6, 1998.

Formal Complaint 98-34-GA

Respondent was counsel of record for a criminal defendant in U.S. District Court. The defendant entered a guilty plea to one count of Using or Carrying a Firearm While Engaging in Drug Trafficking, which carries a mandatory five-year prison sentence. Respondent entered a plea of no contest to allegations that he instructed the defendant to tell the court that he had retained another attorney, which was untrue; failed to correct the misrepresentation made by the defendant; misrepresented to the court that his sole knowledge of the other attorney was that the latter was a Lansing area attorney; failed to advise the court that he had a mentoring relationship with the other attorney and had given that attorney's name to the defendant as a referral; and failed to advise the court that he had written out instructions for the defendant to accuse him of a lack of communication and denied these accusations on the record at sentencing. Respondent stipulated that his conduct violated MCR 9.104(1)-(4); and Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct 1.2(c); 3.3(a)(1), (2) and (4); 3.4(b); 4.1; and 8.4(a)-(c). The panel ordered a 180-day suspension for Formal Complaint 98-34-GA.

Judgment of Conviction 98-85-JC

On May 6, 1998, respondent was convicted, by guilty plea, of Conspiracy to Effect Interstate Commerce by Extortion and Interference with Interstate Commerce by Extortion, in violation of 18 USC 1951. In accordance with MCR 9.120(B)(1), respondent was automatically suspended from the practice of law in Michigan effective May 6, 1998, the date of the felony conviction. The parties stipulated to revocation for Judgment of Conviction 98-85-JC.

Costs were assessed in the amount of \$217.51.