

NOTICE OF SUSPENSION WITH CONDITIONS

Case No. 96-54-GA

Claude R. Thomas, P-26610, Lansing, Michigan, by Attorney Discipline Board Ingham County Hearing Panel #2.

- 1) Suspension - Ninety (90) Days;
- 2) Effective April 16, 1997.

Respondent was retained to institute a sexual harassment claim with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission on the first complainant's behalf and to represent her in related civil proceedings for monetary damages. The complainant paid respondent \$5,000 as advanced fees for his representation in the matters. Respondent pled no contest to allegations that he neglected the matter; commingled the advanced fees with his personal funds; and misappropriated the advanced fees.

The second complainant signed a retainer agreement agreeing to pay respondent a minimum \$6,500 fee to act as successor counsel in an estate. Respondent pled no contest to allegations that he failed to refund unearned fees in excess of \$7,000.

Respondent pled no contest to charges that his conduct violated MCR 9.104(1)-(4); and Michigan Rules of Professional Conduct 1.1(a)-(c); 1.2(a); 1.3; 1.4; 1.15(a)-(c); 1.16(d); 3.2; and 8.4(a)-(c).

The panel ordered that respondent be suspended from the practice of law in Michigan for ninety days and take the State Bar of Michigan Law Office Management Course. Costs were assessed in the amount of \$1691.47.