

IN THE SUPREME COURT OF FLORIDA
(Before a Referee)

THE FLORIDA BAR,
Complainant,

v.

LESLIE ANN FERDERIGOS,
Respondent.

Supreme Court Case
No. SC21-549

The Florida Bar File Nos. 2021-
30,122 (9C) and 2021-30,730 (9C)

CONDITIONAL GUILTY PLEA FOR CONSENT JUDGMENT

COMES NOW, the undersigned respondent, Leslie Ann Ferderigos, and files this Conditional Guilty Plea pursuant to Rule 3-7.9 of the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar.

1. Respondent is, and at all times mentioned herein was, a member of The Florida Bar, subject to the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court of Florida.

2. Respondent is acting freely and voluntarily in this matter and tenders this plea without fear or threat of coercion. Respondent is represented in this matter.

3. As to Case No. SC21-549 [The Florida Bar File No. 2021-30,122 (9C)], there has been a finding of probable cause by the grievance committee.

4. As to The Florida Bar File No. 2021-30,730 (9C), respondent waives a finding of probable cause.

5. The disciplinary measures to be imposed upon respondent are as follows:

A. Public reprimand to be administered by publication.

B. Respondent shall attend The Florida Bar's Advertising Workshop within six months of the Court's order in this matter.

Respondent will pay the \$750.00 fee for her attendance at Advertising Workshop prior to attendance.

C. A one-year period of probation with the following conditions:

i. Respondent will participate actively in the program offered by Florida Lawyers Assistance, Inc. (FLA, Inc.), by signing a rehabilitation contract with that organization within thirty (30) days of the order of the Supreme Court of Florida.

Respondent's probation period will not begin until respondent has signed and returned her rehabilitation contract to FLA, Inc. If respondent is already under contract with FLA, Inc., then the one year of probation will run from the date of the Court's order. Respondent shall

follow all recommendations by Florida Lawyers Assistance, Inc., during the entire probation period.

- ii. Respondent will pay a FLA, Inc. registration fee of \$250.00 and a probation monitoring fee of \$100.00 per month directly to FLA, Inc. during the period of probation.
- iii. The Florida Bar will monitor respondent's compliance with her FLA, Inc. rehabilitation contract, including nonpayment of the monthly monitoring fees. Should respondent fail to pay FLA, Inc., respondent's failure to pay will be reported to the bar and the bar will follow up with regard to respondent's noncompliance, up to and including holding respondent in contempt for failure to pay the monthly monitoring fees.

D. Payment of the bar's disciplinary costs.

6. The following allegations and rules provide the basis for respondent's guilty plea and for the discipline to be imposed in this matter:

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A. Respondent made unprofessional remarks and disparaging statements about opposing counsel and the trial judge in letters, emails, and court pleadings. Respondent represented the

plaintiff in case number 06-2019-CA-025569-A, in the Circuit Court of the Seventeenth Judicial Circuit of Florida before Circuit Court Judge Carlos Rodriguez. On August 4, 2020, a hearing was held on the defendant's motion to dismiss and motion for sanctions pursuant to Florida Statute §57.105. On August 5, 2020, opposing counsel, Daniel Rose, emailed respondent a proposed order. On August 6, 2020, the Order Granting Motion to Dismiss was entered.

B. On August 6, 2020, and August 7, 2020, respondent filed multiple motions and sent emails to opposing counsel and the court that accusing opposing counsel of submitting a fraudulent order. On August 9, 2020, respondent filed an Amended Motion for Rehearing (also dated July 6, 2020) where she removed the accusatory statements from her August 7, 2020, Motion for Rehearing.

C. In her response to the bar, respondent stated that she initially believed opposing counsel fraudulently submitted an order that differed from the one he originally presented to her. However, respondent later realized that Judge Rodriguez had drafted the order that was entered.

D. On September 10, 2020, a rehearing (by videoconference) was held regarding the August 6, 2020, Order

Granting Motion to Dismiss. Prior to the hearing, respondent called and apologized to opposing counsel for accusing him of submitting a fraudulent order. The judge had realized that there was a mistake in the August 6, 2020, order as drafted and, in light of respondent's apology, declined to impose sanctions against respondent and vacated the August 6, 2020, order.

E. Pursuant to this Conditional Guilty Plea, respondent admits to violating the following Rules Regulating The Florida Bar in The Florida Bar File No. 2021-30,122 (9C): 3-4.3 [Misconduct and Minor Misconduct]; 4-8.2(a) [Impugning Qualifications and Integrity of Judges or Other Officers]; 4-8.4(d) [Misconduct]; and Oath of Admission to The Florida Bar.

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F. On or about March 29, 2021, respondent posted a video to her YouTube channel titled "In Re Guardianship of John Doe". In the video clip, respondent discussed a guardianship matter that she described as "another heavily litigated case of mine" and detailed facts related to the parties and legal issues. Complainant, an attorney who represented a temporary guardian in a case similar to the one described by respondent, filed a bar grievance alleging that

respondent was discussing the confidential guardianship proceeding where he represented the temporary guardian in the video. In the video, respondent represented that she had spoken to the guardian in the case and described the purported conversation. Complainant alleged that, if this were true, it would constitute a violation of Rule 4-4.2 as the guardian was represented by him and he had not given consent for respondent to speak with his client.

G. In addition, complainant alleged that some of the details provided in the video were false or exaggerations of the truth and disparaged the professional guardian and the court system. In response to the complaint, respondent denied that she was discussing the case in which complainant represented the guardian and stated that she was using a fictional account to educate the public about the issues and dangers of professional guardians. While respondent utilized stock video footage and stock photos, respondent did not provide any written or verbal disclaimers that this was a dramatization and not an actual event.

H. Pursuant to this Conditional Guilty Plea, respondent admits to violating the following Rules Regulating The Florida Bar in

The Florida Bar File No. 2021-30,730 (9C): 4-7.13 [Deceptive and Inherently Misleading Advertisements] and 4-8.4(d) [Misconduct].

7. In mitigation, respondent does not have a prior disciplinary history [Florida Standards for Imposing Lawyer Sanctions 3.3(b)(1)]; respondent was suffering from serious mental health problems during the time that the misconduct occurred [3.3(b)(3), (8)]; respondent has been cooperative by voluntarily submitting to an evaluation through Florida Lawyers Assistance, Inc., and she has made full and free disclosure to the bar [3.3(b)(5)]; respondent was admitted to The Florida Bar in 2017 and is inexperienced in the practice of law [3.3(b)(6)]; and, she has expressed remorse for her misconduct [3.3(b)(12)]. In aggravation, respondent engaged in multiple offenses [3.2(b)(4)].

8. The Florida Bar has approved this proposed plea in the manner required by Rule 3-7.9.

9. If this plea is not finally approved by the referee and the Supreme Court of Florida, then it shall be of no effect and may not be used by the parties in any way.

10. If this plea is approved, then respondent agrees to pay all reasonable costs associated with this case pursuant to Rule 3-7.6(q) in the amount of \$1,710.00. These costs are due within 30 days of the Court

order. Respondent agrees that if the costs are not paid within 30 days of this Court's order becoming final, respondent shall pay interest on any unpaid costs at the statutory rate. Respondent further agrees not to attempt to discharge the obligation for payment of the bar's costs in any future proceedings, including but not limited to, a petition for bankruptcy. Respondent shall be deemed delinquent and ineligible to practice law pursuant to Rule 1-3.6 if the cost judgment is not satisfied within 30 days of the final court order, unless deferred by the Board of Governors of The Florida Bar.

11. Respondent acknowledges the obligation to pay the costs of this proceeding and that payment is evidence of strict compliance with the conditions of any disciplinary order or agreement and is also evidence of good faith and fiscal responsibility. Respondent understands that failure to pay the costs of this proceeding may reflect adversely on any reinstatement proceedings or any other bar disciplinary matter in which respondent is involved.

12. This Conditional Guilty Plea for Consent Judgment fully complies with all requirements of the Rules Regulating The Florida Bar.

Dated this 31 day of August, 2021.



Leslie Ann Ferderigos
Leslie Ann Law, P.A.
10454 Birch Tree Lane
Windermere, FL 34786-8013
(407) 969-6116
Florida Bar ID No.: 127526
leslie@leslieannlaw.com

Dated this 31 day of August, 2021.



Matthew Wilson Dietz
Counsel for Respondent
2990 S.W. 35th Avenue
Miami, FL 33133-3410
(305) 669-2822
Florida Bar ID No.: 84905
mdietz@justdigit.org

Dated this 31st day of August, 2021.



Karen Clark Bankowitz, Bar Counsel
The Florida Bar
Orlando Branch Office
1000 Legion Place, Suite 1625
Orlando, Florida 32801-1050
(407) 425-5424
Florida Bar ID No. 706531
kbankowitz@floridabar.org