

People v. Juliet Rene Piccone. 24PDJ007. December 12, 2024.

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge approved the parties' stipulation to discipline and suspended Juliet Rene Piccone (attorney registration number 30934) for three years, effective December 12, 2024. The sanction takes into account significant mitigation. To be reinstated, Piccone must prove by clear and convincing evidence that she has been rehabilitated, has complied with all disciplinary orders and rules, and is fit to practice law.

In July 2023, a client consulted with Piccone after paying a \$250.00 consultation fee. The client retained Piccone, who drafted and e-filed a verified complaint. The client then paid Piccone a \$2,500.00 retainer. Several days thereafter, the court's e-filing system emailed Piccone a notice stating that the documents she filed were rejected. Piccone did not realize this notice had been sent to her. In the last two weeks of July 2023, the client called Piccone several times, leaving messages. When Piccone did not respond, the client filed a pro se complaint. Although Piccone did not follow through with the representation and had not earned the retainer, Piccone knowingly spent the retainer for her personal use. Piccone did not respond to disciplinary authorities' communications. Ultimately, in March 2024, Piccone refunded the full retainer.

In another matter, a prospective client booked a virtual consultation with Piccone and, using his credit card, paid the consultation fee. Piccone did not appear for the scheduled consultation and did not respond to the individual's communication attempts. The individual requested a refund; after disputing the charge with his credit card company, he received a reversal of payment.

In a final case, a couple paid Piccone a \$3,000.00 retainer to defend them against a civil lawsuit. After some delay, Piccone filed an answer and counterclaim for them in April 2023. The clients did not hear from Piccone thereafter, and she did not respond to opposing counsel or court filings. Piccone failed to account for how or when she earned the clients' funds. In October 2023, the court entered default against the clients. Later, the clients saw that the case was set for a status hearing; after they unsuccessfully attempted to contact Piccone, they retained new counsel. Meanwhile, the court entered judgment and an order for possession, and sheriffs took possession from the clients of three dogs subject to the order. The clients' new counsel successfully moved to set aside the default judgment based in part on several meritorious defenses Piccone pleaded in the answer. After additional litigation, the court ordered return of the dogs to the clients. A trial is set for January 2025. Piccone refunded the retainer in 2024.

Through this conduct, Piccone violated Colo. RPC 1.3 (a lawyer must act with reasonable diligence and promptness when representing a client); Colo. RPC 1.4(a)(2) (a lawyer must reasonably consult with a client about the means by which the client's objectives are to be accomplished); Colo. RPC 1.15A(a) (a lawyer must hold client property separate from the lawyer's own property); Colo. RPC 1.15A(b) (on receiving funds or other property of a client, a lawyer must promptly deliver to the client any funds or property that person is entitled to receive); and Colo. RPC 8.4(c) (providing that it is professional misconduct for a lawyer to engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation). The case file is public per C.R.C.P. 242.41(a).