

People v. Randall Robert Steichen. 16PDJ059. December 20, 2016.

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge approved the parties' conditional admission of misconduct and publicly censured Randall Robert Steichen (attorney registration number 12535), effective December 20, 2016.

In 2012, Steichen began offering legal advice to the widow of a former client. A lawsuit had been filed in Colorado against the widow and the former client's estate, alleging breach of fiduciary duty, among other things. In addition to providing legal advice, Steichen discussed legal strategy, trial strategy, and draft pleadings with the attorneys that had been previously retained in the litigation. During this timeframe, however, Steichen's Colorado license was administratively suspended due to his failure to pay registration fees and to comply with continuing legal education requirements. Steichen's license was reinstated in late 2012. Then, after the previously retained lawyers withdrew, he defended the lawsuit. Steichen failed to give his client in this lawsuit a written statement of the basis or rate of his fee. In addition, although he and his client verbally agreed to the terms of a draft contingent fee agreement, the agreement was never executed.

Steichen's conduct violated Colo. RPC 1.5(b) (a lawyer shall inform a client in writing about the lawyer's fees and expenses within a reasonable time after being retained, if the lawyer has not regularly represented the client); Colo. RPC 1.5(c) (a lawyer shall enter into contingent fee agreements that conform to the requirements of Chapter 23.3 of the Colorado Rules of Civil Procedure); and Colo. RPC 5.5(a)(1) (a lawyer shall not practice law without a law license or other specific authorization).