

People v. Nyasha Augusta West. 17PDJ020. March 21, 2017.

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge approved the parties' conditional admission of misconduct and imposed a sixty-day suspension on Nyasha Augusta West (New Jersey attorney registration number 011212006 and Maryland attorney registration number 0812180288). The suspension is fully stayed during a two-year period of probation, with conditions. West's probation took effect March 21, 2017.

West has a New Jersey law license, which has been on inactive status since autumn 2011. She is also licensed to practice law in Maryland, but her Maryland license was suspended for failure to pay registration fees from April 2011 through May 2012; from March 2013 through October 2013; and from March 2015 through May 2016.

West moved to Colorado in 2010. She opened her own firm in 2012 and began representing bankruptcy clients, even though her license in New Jersey was inactive and her license in Maryland was suspended for significant periods of time. To practice in front of the Colorado bankruptcy court, West was required to be in good standing in all courts where admitted, but she was not. Her conduct thus violated Colo. RPC 5.5(a)(1) (a lawyer shall not practice law without a valid law license or other specific authorization).

During her representation of bankruptcy clients, West mistakenly deposited unearned funds into her operating account, rather than her trust account. Through this conduct, West violated Colo. RPC 1.5(f) (a lawyer does not earn fees until a benefit is conferred on the client or the lawyer performs a legal service, and unearned fees must be deposited in the lawyer's trust account).