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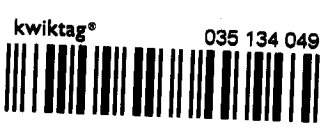

State Bar Court of California

Hearing Department
Los Angeles

PUBLIC MATTER

Counsel For The State Bar	Case Number (s)	(for Court's use)
CHRISTINE SOUHRADA **DEPUTY TRIAL COUNSEL** **1149 SOUTH HILL STREET, 10TH FL.** **LOS ANGELES, CA 90015-2299** **TELEPHONE: (213) 765-1162** Bar # **228256**	**07-C-14860**	FILED NOV 19 2008 STATE BAR COURT CLERK'S OFFICE LOS ANGELES
In Pro Per Respondent **MICHAEL L. DEFRANK** **35325 DATE PALM DR. #123** **CATHEDRAL CITY, CA 92234-7030** **(760) 202-3330** Bar # **187888**	Submitted to: **Settlement Judge** STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING **PUBLIC REPROVAL** ☐ PREVIOUS STIPULATION REJECTED	
In the Matter Of: **MICHAEL L. DEFRANK** Bar # **187888** A Member of the State Bar of California (Respondent)		

Note: All information required by this form and any additional information which cannot be provided in the space provided, must be set forth in an attachment to this stipulation under specific headings, e.g., "Facts," "Dismissals," "Conclusions of Law," "Supporting Authority," etc.

A. Parties' Acknowledgments:

(1) Respondent is a member of the State Bar of California, admitted **May 27, 1997**.

(2) The parties agree to be bound by the factual stipulations contained herein even if conclusions of law or disposition are rejected or changed by the Supreme Court.

(3) All investigations or proceedings listed by case number in the caption of this stipulation are entirely resolved by this stipulation and are deemed consolidated. Dismissed charge(s)/count(s) are listed under "Dismissals." The stipulation consists of 9 pages, not including the order.

(4) A statement of acts or omissions acknowledged by Respondent as cause or causes for discipline is included under "Facts."

(5) Conclusions of law, drawn from and specifically referring to the facts are also included under "Conclusions of Law".

(6) The parties must include supporting authority for the recommended level of discipline under the heading "Supporting Authority."

(7) No more than 30 days prior to the filing of this stipulation, Respondent has been advised in writing of any pending investigation/proceeding not resolved by this stipulation, except for criminal investigations.

(8) Payment of Disciplinary Costs—Respondent acknowledges the provisions of Bus. & Prof. Code §§6086.10 & 6140.7. (Check one option only):

- ☐ costs added to membership fee for calendar year following effective date of discipline (public reproval)
- ☐ case ineligible for costs (private reproval)
- ☒ costs to be paid in equal amounts for the following membership years: 2010, 2011, 2012 ~~three billing cycles following the effective date of the Supreme Court Order.~~ See also rule 286, Rules Proc. of State Bar.
  (hardship, special circumstances or other good cause per rule 284, Rules of Procedure)
- ☐ costs waived in part as set forth in a separate attachment entitled "Partial Waiver of Costs"
- ☐ costs entirely waived

DFM

(9) The parties understand that:

(a) ☐ A private reproval imposed on a respondent as a result of a stipulation approved by the Court prior to initiation of a State Bar Court proceeding is part of the respondent's officials State Bar membership records, but is not disclosed in response to public inquiries and is not reported on the State Bar's web page. The record of the proceeding in which such a private reproval was imposed is not available to the public except as part of the record of any subsequent proceeding in which it is introduced as evidents of a prior record of discipline under the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar.

(b) ☐ A private reproval imposed on a respondent after initiation of a State Bar Court proceeding is part of the respondent's official State Bar membership records, is disclosed in response to public inquiries and is reported as a record of public discipline on the State Bar's web page.

(c) ☒ A public reproval imposed on a respondent is publicly available as part of the respondent's official State Bar membership records, is disclosed in response to public inquiries and is reported as a record of public discipline on the State Bar's web page.

B. Aggravating Circumstances [for definition, see Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct, standard 1.2(b)]. Facts supporting aggravating circumstances are required.

(1) ☐ **Prior record of discipline** [see standard 1.2(f)]

(a) ☐ State Bar Court case # of prior case

(b) ☐ Date prior discipline effective

(c) ☐ Rules of Professional Conduct/ State Bar Act violations:

(d) ☐ Degree of prior discipline

(e) ☐ If Respondent has two or more incidents of prior discipline, use space provided below or a separate attachment entitled "Prior Discipline.

(2) ☐ **Dishonesty:** Respondent's misconduct was surrounded by or followed by bad faith, dishonesty, concealment, overreaching or other violations of the State Bar Act or Rules of Professional Conduct.

(3) ☐ **Trust Violation:** Trust funds or property were involved and Respondent refused or was unable to account to the client or person who was the object of the misconduct for improper conduct toward said funds or property.

(4) ☐ **Harm:** Respondent's misconduct harmed significantly a client, the public or the administration of justice.

(5) ☐ **Indifference:** Respondent demonstrated indifference toward rectification of or atonement for the consequences of his or her misconduct.

(6) ☐ **Lack of Cooperation:** Respondent displayed a lack of candor and cooperation to victims of his/her misconduct or to the State Bar during disciplinary investigation or proceedings.

(7) ☐ **Multiple/Pattern of Misconduct:** Respondent's current misconduct evidences multiple acts of wrongdoing or demonstrates a pattern of misconduct.

(8) ☒ **No aggravating circumstances** are involved.

Additional aggravating circumstances:

C. Mitigating Circumstances [see standard 1.2(e)]. Facts supporting mitigating circumstances are required.

(1) ☐ **No Prior Discipline:** Respondent has no prior record of discipline over many years of practice coupled with present misconduct which is not deemed serious.

(2) ☐ **No Harm:** Respondent did not harm the client or person who was the object of the misconduct.

(3) ☐ **Candor/Cooperation:** Respondent displayed spontaneous candor and cooperation with the victims of his/her misconduct and to the State Bar during disciplinary investigation and proceedings.

(4) ☐ **Remorse:** Respondent promptly took objective steps spontaneously demonstrating remorse and recognition of the wrongdoing, which steps were designed to timely atone for any consequences of his/her misconduct.

(5) ☐ **Restitution:** Respondent paid $ on in restitution to without the threat or force of disciplinary, civil or criminal proceedings.

(6) ☐ **Delay:** These disciplinary proceedings were excessively delayed. The delay is not attributable to Respondent and the delay prejudiced him/her.

(7) ☐ **Good Faith:** Respondent acted in good faith.

(8) ☐ **Emotional/Physical Difficulties:** At the time of the stipulated act or acts of professional misconduct Respondent suffered extreme emotional difficulties or physical disabilities which expert testimony would establish was directly responsible for the misconduct. The difficulties or disabilities were not the product of any illegal conduct by the member, such as illegal drug or substance abuse, and Respondent no longer suffers from such difficulties or disabilities.

(9) ☐ **Severe Financial Stress:** At the time of the misconduct, Respondent suffered from severe financial stress which resulted from circumstances not reasonably foreseeable or which were beyond his/her control and which were directly responsible for the misconduct.

(10) ☐ **Family Problems:** At the time of the misconduct, Respondent suffered extreme difficulties in his/her personal life which were other than emotional or physical in nature.

(11) ☐ **Good Character:** Respondent's good character is attested to by a wide range of references in the legal and general communities who are aware of the full extent of his/her misconduct.

(12) ☐ **Rehabilitation:** Considerable time has passed since the acts of professional misconduct occurred followed by convincing proof of subsequent rehabilitation.

(13) ☐ **No mitigating circumstances** are involved.

Additional mitigating circumstances:

Respondent has no prior record of discipline since being admitted in 1997

D. Discipline:

(1) ☐ **Private reproval (check applicable conditions, if any, below)**

(a) ☐ Approved by the Court prior to initiation of the State Bar Court proceedings (no public disclosure).

(b) ☐ Approved by the Court after initiation of the State Bar Court proceedings (public disclosure).

or

(2) ☒ **Public reproval (Check applicable conditions, if any, below)**

E. Conditions Attached to Reproval:

(1) ☒ Respondent must comply with the conditions attached to the reproval for a period of **three years**.

(2) ☒ During the condition period attached to the reproval, Respondent must comply with the provisions of the State Bar Act and Rules of Professional Conduct.

(3) ☒ Within ten (10) days of any change, Respondent must report to the Membership Records Office of the State Bar and to the Office of Probation of the State Bar of California ("Office of Probation"), all changes of information, including current office address and telephone number, or other address for State Bar purposes, as prescribed by section 6002.1 of the Business and Professions Code.

(4) ☒ Within thirty (30) days from the effective date of discipline, Respondent must contact the Office of Probation and schedule a meeting with Respondent's assigned probation deputy to discuss these terms and conditions of probation. Upon the direction of the Office of Probation, Respondent must meet with the probation deputy either in-person or by telephone. During the period of probation, Respondent must promptly meet with the probation deputy as directed and upon request.

DFM (5) ☒ Respondent must submit written quarterly reports to the Office of Probation on each January 10, April 10, July 10, and October 10 of the condition period attached to the reproval. Under penalty of perjury, Respondent must state whether Respondent has complied with the State Bar Act, the Rules of Professional Conduct, and all conditions of the reproval during the preceding calendar quarter. Respondent must also state in each report whether there are any proceedings pending against him or her in the State Bar Court and if so, the case number and current status of that proceeding. If the first report would cover less than 30 (thirty) days, that report must be submitted on the next following quarter date, and cover the extended period.

In addition to all quarterly reports, a final report, containing the same information, is due no earlier than twenty (20) days before the last day of the condition period and no later than the last day of the condition period.

(6) ☐ Respondent must be assigned a probation monitor. Respondent must promptly review the terms and conditions of probation with the probation monitor to establish a manner and schedule of compliance. During the period of probation, Respondent must furnish such reports as may be requested, in addition to the quarterly reports required to be submitted to the Office of Probation. Respondent must cooperate fully with the monitor.

(7) ☒ Subject to assertion of applicable privileges, Respondent must answer fully, promptly and truthfully any inquiries of the Office of Probation and any probation monitor assigned under these conditions which are directed to Respondent personally or in writing relating to whether Respondent is complying or has complied with the conditions attached to the reproval.

(8) ☒ Within one (1) year of the effective date of the discipline herein, Respondent must provide to the Office of Probation satisfactory proof of attendance at a session of the Ethics School, and passage of the test given at the end of that session.

☐ No Ethics School recommended. Reason: .

(9) ☒ Respondent must comply with all conditions of probation imposed in the underlying criminal matter and must so declare under penalty of perjury in conjunction with any quarterly report to be filed with the Office of Probation.

(10) ☒ Respondent must provide proof of passage of the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination ("MPRE"), administered by the National Conference of Bar Examiners, to the Office of Probation within one year of the effective date of the reproval.

☐ No MPRE recommended. Reason: .

(11) ☒ The following conditions are attached hereto and incorporated:

☒ Substance Abuse Conditions ☐ Law Office Management Conditions

☐ Medical Conditions ☐ Financial Conditions

F. Other Conditions Negotiated by the Parties:

In the Matter of **MICHAEL L. DEFRANK**	Case number(s): **07-C-14860**

Substance Abuse Conditions

a. ☒ Respondent must abstain from use of any alcoholic beverages, and shall not use or possess any narcotics, dangerous or restricted drugs, controlled substances, marijuana, or associated paraphernalia, except with a valid prescription.

b. ☒ Respondent must attend at least **two** meetings per month of:

- ☒ Alcoholics Anonymous
- ☐ Narcotics Anonymous
- ☐ The Other Bar
- ☐ Other program

As a separate reporting requirement, Respondent must provide to the Office of Probation satisfactory proof of attendance during each month, on or before the tenth (10th) day of the following month, during the condition or probation period.

c. ☒ Respondent must select a license medical laboratory approved by the Office of Probation. Respondent must furnish to the laboratory blood and/or urine samples as may be required to show that Respondent has abstained from alcohol and/or drugs. The samples must be furnished to the laboratory in such a manner as may be specified by the laboratory to ensure specimen integrity. Respondent must cause the laboratory to provide to the Office of Probation, at the Respondent's expense, a screening report on or before the tenth day of each month of the condition or probation period, containing an analysis of Respondent's blood and/or urine obtained not more than ten (10) days previously.

d. ☒ Respondent must maintain with the Office of Probation a current address and a current telephone number at which Respondent can be reached. Respondent must return any call from the Office of Probation concerning testing of Respondent's blood or urine within twelve (12) hours. For good cause, the Office of Probation may require Respondent to deliver Respondent's urine and/or blood sample(s) for additional reports to the laboratory described above no later than six hours after actual notice to Respondent that the Office of Probation requires an additional screening report.

e. ☒ Upon the request of the Office of Probation, Respondent must provide the Office of Probation with medical waivers and access to all of Respondent's medical records. Revocation of any medical waiver is a violation of this condition. Any medical records obtained by the Office of Probation are confidential and no information concerning them or their contents will be given to anyone except members of the Office of Probation, Office of the Chief Trial Counsel, and the State Bar Court who are directly involved with maintaining, enforcing or adjudicating this condition.

Attachment to Stipulation Re Facts, Conclusions of Law and Disposition

in the Matter of Michael L. DeFrank

Case no. 07-C-14860

I. Facts

1. On September 21, 2007 Respondent was arrested for a DUI. Prior to the arrest, Respondent refused to take a field sobriety test. A blood test taken after Respondent was arrested showed a blood-alcohol level of 0.27%.

2. Respondent subsequently pled guilty to a violation of vehicle code section 23152(b) (Driving with a blood alcohol level of .08% or more).

3. Previously, in January of 2000, Respondent had been convicted of another DUI, which occurred in 1999.

II. Conclusions of Law

6. The facts and circumstances surrounding Respondent's criminal violation do not involve moral turpitude, but do involve other misconduct warranting discipline.

III. Supporting Authority

In assessing the level of discipline in a criminal conviction case, even where those convictions do not directly involve the practice of law, the court has found it to be its duty to impose a discipline that will protect the public from potential harm. *In re Kelley* (1990) 52 Cal. 3d 487, 496. *Kelley* involved a Respondent, who, while still on probation for a DUI, committed another DUI. While the Court acknowledged that Kelley's misconduct caused no harm to her clients, the court reasoned:

> "this fact alone does not insulate her from discipline aimed at ensuring that her potentially harmful misconduct does not recur Petitioner's behavior evidences both a lack of respect for the legal system and an alcohol abuse problem. Both problems, if not checked, may spill over into petitioner's professional practice and adversely affect her representation of clients and her practice of law. Our task in disciplinary cases is preventative, protective and remedial, not punitive. ... Keeping this in mind, it is our responsibility to impose a discipline that will protect the public from this potential harm." *Id.*

IV. Estimate of Costs of Disciplinary Proceedings

Respondent acknowledges that the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel has informed Respondent that as of November 5, 2008, the estimated prosecution costs in this matter are approximately $1,636.00. Respondent acknowledges that this figure is an estimate only. Respondent further acknowledges that should this stipulation be rejected or should relief from the stipulation be granted, the costs in this matter may increase due to the cost of further proceedings.

(Do not write above this line.)

In the Matter of **MICHAEL L. DEFRANK**	Case number(s): **07-C-14860**

SIGNATURE OF THE PARTIES

By their signatures below, the parties and their counsel, as applicable, signify their agreement with each of the recitations and each of the terms and conditions of this Stipulation Re Fact, Conclusions of Law and Disposition.

Nov 12, 2008 Date	Respondent's Signature	MICHAEL L. DEFRANK Print Name
~~Nov 13 '08~~ Date	Respondent's Counsel Signature	Print Name
Nov 13 '08 Date	Deputy Trial Counsel's Signature	CHRISTINE SOUHRADA Print Name

(Do not write above this line.)

In the Matter Of **MICHAEL L. DEFRANK**	Case Number(s): **07-C-14860**

ORDER

Finding that the stipulation protects the public and that the interests of Respondent will be served by any conditions attached to the reproval, IT IS ORDERED that the requested dismissal of counts/charges, if any, is GRANTED without prejudice, and:

- ☐ The stipulated facts and disposition are APPROVED AND THE REPROVAL IMPOSED.
- ☒ The stipulated facts and disposition are APPROVED AS MODIFIED as set forth below, and the REPROVAL IMPOSED.
- ☐ All court dates in the Hearing Department are vacated.

See changes to Paragraph A(8) [Payment of Disciplinary Costs] - p. 2
See inclusion of Paragraph E(5) [Quarterly Probation Reports] - p. 4

The parties are bound by the stipulation as approved unless: 1) a motion to withdraw or modify the stipulation, filed within 15 days after service of this order, is granted; or 2) this court modifies or further modifies the approved stipulation. (See rule 125(b), Rules of Procedure.) **Otherwise the stipulation shall be effective 15 days after service of this order.**

Failure to comply with any conditions attached to this reproval may constitute cause for a separate proceeding for willful breach of rule 1-110, Rules of Professional Conduct.

11/19/08
Date

Donald F. Miles
Judge of the State Bar Court

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

[Rule 62(b), Rules Proc.; Code Civ. Proc., § 1013a(4)]

I am a Case Administrator of the State Bar Court of California. I am over the age of eighteen and not a party to the within proceeding. Pursuant to standard court practice, in the City and County of Los Angeles, on November 19, 2008, I deposited a true copy of the following document(s):

STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING

in a sealed envelope for collection and mailing on that date as follows:

☒ by first-class mail, with postage thereon fully prepaid, through the United States Postal Service at Los Angeles, California, addressed as follows:

MICHAEL L DEFRANK ESQ
LAW OFC MICHAEL L DEFRANK
35325 DATE PALM DR #123
CATHEDRAL CITY, CA 92234 - 7030

☒ by interoffice mail through a facility regularly maintained by the State Bar of California addressed as follows:

Christine A. Souhrada, Enforcement, Los Angeles

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in Los Angeles, California, on November 19, 2008.

Julieta E. Gonzales
Case Administrator
State Bar Court