

## State Bar Court of California **Hearing Department** Los Angeles **ACTUAL SUSPENSION**

Counsel For The State Bar Case Number(s): For Court use only 13-O-12536-LMA **PUBLIC MATTER** R. Kevin Bucher **Deputy Trial Counsel** 845 S. Figueroa Street Los Angeles, CA 90017-2515 (213) 765-1630 MAR 1 1 201 Bar # 132003 In Pro Per Respondent STATE BAR COURT CLERK'S OFFICE **SAN FRANCISCO Dirk Dwight Sharp** 61535 S. Highway 97, Suite 9-174 Bend, OR 97702 (541) 330-1137 Submitted to: Assigned Judge Bar # 130772 STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND **DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING** In the Matter of: **DIRK DWIGHT SHARP ACTUAL SUSPENSION** Bar # 130772 PREVIOUS STIPULATION REJECTED A Member of the State Bar of California

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:

(Respondent)

- Respondent is a member of the State Bar of California, admitted December 14, 1987. (1)
- (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.
- All investigations or proceedings listed by case number in the caption of this stipulation are entirely resolved by (3)this stipulation and are deemed consolidated. Dismissed charge(s)/count(s) are listed under "Dismissals." The stipulation consists of 13 pages, not including the order.
- A statement of acts or omissions acknowledged by Respondent as cause or causes for discipline is included (4) under "Facts."
- Conclusions of law, drawn from and specifically referring to the facts are also included under "Conclusions of (5) Law".

(Effective January 1, 2014)

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(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)	Pa <sub>3</sub> 614	yment of Disciplinary Costs—Respondent acknowledges the provisions of Bus. & Prof. Code §§6086.10 & 40.7. (Check one option only):			
		relief is obtained per rule 5.130, Rules of Procedure.			
	Misc	ravating Circumstances [Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional conduct, standards 1.2(f) & 1.5]. Facts supporting aggravating circumstances are ired.			
(1)	□ (a)	Prior record of discipline  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.			
(2)		<b>Dishonesty:</b> Respondent's misconduct was intentional, surrounded by, or followed by bad faith, dishonesty, concealment, overreaching or other violations of the State Bar Act or Rules of Professional Conduct.			
(3)		<b>Trust Violation:</b> 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)	$\boxtimes$	Harm: Respondent's misconduct harmed significantly a client, the public or the administration of justice. See Attachment, Page 10			
(5)		Indifference: Respondent demonstrated indifference toward rectification of or atonement for the consequences of his or her misconduct.			
(6)		<b>Lack of Cooperation:</b> Respondent displayed a lack of candor and cooperation to victims of his/her misconduct or to the State Bar during disciplinary investigation or proceedings.			

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(7)	$\boxtimes$	Multiple/Pattern of Misconduct: Respondent's current misconduct evidences multiple acts of wrongdoing or demonstrates a pattern of misconduct. See Attachment, Page 10		
(8)		Restitution: Respondent failed to make restitution.		
(9)		No aggravating circumstances are involved.		
Add	ition	al aggravating circumstances:		
C. I	Mitig circu	ating Circumstances [see standards 1.2(g) & 1.6]. Facts supporting mitigating imstances are required.		
(1)		<b>No Prior Discipline:</b> 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, the public, or the administration of justice.		
(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)		<b>Remorse:</b> 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)		<b>Restitution:</b> Respondent paid \$ on in restitution to without the threat or force of disciplinary, civil or criminal proceedings.		
(6)		<b>Delay:</b> These disciplinary proceedings were excessively delayed. The delay is not attributable to Respondent and the delay prejudiced him/her.		
(7)		Good Faith: Respondent acted with a good faith belief that was honestly held and reasonable.		
(8)		<b>Emotional/Physical Difficulties:</b> At the time of the stipulated act or acts of professional misconduct Respondent suffered extreme emotional difficulties or physical or mental 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 the difficulties or disabilities no longer pose a risk that Respondent will commit misconduct.		
(9)		<b>Severe Financial Stress:</b> 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)		<b>Family Problems:</b> 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)		<b>Good Character:</b> Respondent's extraordinarily 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)		<b>Rehabilitation:</b> Considerable time has passed since the acts of professional misconduct occurred followed by convincing proof of subsequent rehabilitation.		
(13)		No mitigating circumstances are involved.		

Professional Conduct.

(2)

(3)

purposes, as prescribed by section 6002.1 of the Business and Professions Code.

general law, pursuant to standard 1.2(c)(1), Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct.

During the probation period, Respondent must comply with the provisions of the State Bar Act and Rules of

Within ten (10) days of any change, Respondent must report to the Membership Records Office of the

information, including current office address and telephone number, or other address for State Bar

State Bar and to the Office of Probation of the State Bar of California ("Office of Probation"), all changes of

(4)		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.  Respondent must submit written quarterly reports to the Office of Probation on each January 10, April 10, July 10, and October 10 of the period of probation. Under penalty of perjury, Respondent must state whether Respondent has complied with the State Bar Act, the Rules of Professional Conduct, and all			
		are a	iny proceedings pending against him or he	er in the ort wo	quarter. Respondent must also state whether there e State Bar Court and if so, the case number and uld cover less than 30 days, that report must be ended period.
		In ad twent	dition to all quarterly reports, a final report ty (20) days before the last day of the peri	, conta od of p	ining the same information, is due no earlier than robation and no later than the last day of probation.
(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 to the monitor 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 probation 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 probation conditions.			
(8)	$\boxtimes$	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	n:	•
(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)	$\boxtimes$	The fo	ollowing conditions are attached hereto an	nd inco	porated:
			Substance Abuse Conditions		Law Office Management Conditions
			Medical Conditions	$\boxtimes$	Financial Conditions
F. O	ther	Con	ditions Negotiated by the Parties	<b>3</b> :	
(1)		Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination: 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 during the period of actual suspension or within one year, whichever period is longer. Failure to pass the MPRE results in actual suspension without further hearing until passage. But see rule 9.10(b), California Rules of Court, and rule 5.162(A) & (E), Rules of Procedure.			on ("MPRE"), administered by the National tion during the period of actual suspension or within the the MPRE results in actual suspension without
		<b>□</b> 1	No MPRE recommended. Reason:	•	

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(2)		Rule 9.20, California Rules of Court: Respondent must comply with the requirements of rule 9.20, California Rules of Court, and perform the acts specified in subdivisions (a) and (c) of that rule within 30 and 40 calendar days, respectively, after the effective date of the Supreme Court's Order in this matter.		
(3)		Conditional Rule 9.20, California Rules of Court: If Respondent remains actually suspended for 90 days or more, he/she must comply with the requirements of rule 9.20, California Rules of Court, and perform the acts specified in subdivisions (a) and (c) of that rule within 120 and 130 calendar days, respectively, after the effective date of the Supreme Court's Order in this matter.		
(4)		Credit for Interim Suspension [conviction referral cases only]: Respondent will be credited for the period of his/her interim suspension toward the stipulated period of actual suspension. Date of commencement of interim suspension:		
(5)		Other Conditions:		

(Do	o not write above this line.)						
In the Matter of: DIRK DWIGHT SHARP			Case Number(s): 13-O-12536				
Fi	nancial Conditions				<del> </del>		
a.	Restitution						
	Respondent must pay restituti payee(s) listed below. If the C or any portion of the principal amount(s) paid, plus applicable	Client Security Fund (" amount(s) listed belo	CSF") has	reimbursed one or more of t	he pavee(s) for all		
	Payee	Principal Amount		Interest Accrues From	]		
			<del></del>		-		
			-				
					]		
	Respondent must pay above-in Probation not later than	referenced restitution	and provide	e satisfactory proof of paymo	ent to the Office of		
b.	Installment Restitution Payment	ts					
	must provide satisfactory proo as otherwise directed by the C probation (or period of reprova	Respondent must pay the above-referenced restitution on the payment schedule set forth below. Respondent must provide satisfactory proof of payment to the Office of Probation with each quarterly probation report, or as otherwise directed by the Office of Probation. No later than 30 days prior to the expiration of the period of probation (or period of reproval), Respondent must make any necessary final payment(s) in order to complete the payment of restitution, including interest, in full.					
	Payee/CSF (as applicable)	Minimum Payment	Amount	Payment Frequency	]		
			-				
	If Respondent fails to pay any the remaining balance is due a	installment as descrit and payable immediat	ped above, ely.	or as may be modified by th	e State Bar Court,		
c.	Client Funds Certificate						
	<ul> <li>If Respondent possess report, Respondent me public accountant or or</li> </ul>	ust file with each requ	ired report	g the period covered by a re a certificate from Responde red by the Office of Probatio	nt and/or a certified		
	California, at a bra	naintained a bank acc unch located within the nt" or "Clients' Funds	e State of C	ank authorized to do busine: alifornia, and that such acco	ss in the State of ount is designated		

- b. Respondent has kept and maintained the following:
  - i. A written ledger for each client on whose behalf funds are held that sets forth:
    - 1. the name of such client:
    - 2. the date, amount and source of all funds received on behalf of such client;
    - the date, amount, payee and purpose of each disbursement made on behalf of such client; and.
    - 4. the current balance for such client.
  - ii. a written journal for each client trust fund account that sets forth:
    - 1. the name of such account;
    - 2. the date, amount and client affected by each debit and credit; and,
    - 3. the current balance in such account.
  - iii. all bank statements and cancelled checks for each client trust account; and,
  - iv. each monthly reconciliation (balancing) of (i), (ii), and (iii), above, and if there are any differences between the monthly total balances reflected in (i), (ii), and (iii), above, the reasons for the differences.
- c. Respondent has maintained a written journal of securities or other properties held for clients that specifies:
  - i. each item of security and property held;
  - ii. the person on whose behalf the security or property is held;
  - iii. the date of receipt of the security or property;
  - iv. the date of distribution of the security or property; and,
  - v. the person to whom the security or property was distributed.
- If Respondent does not possess any client funds, property or securities during the entire period
  covered by a report, Respondent must so state under penalty of perjury in the report filed with the
  Office of Probation for that reporting period. In this circumstance, Respondent need not file the
  accountant's certificate described above.
- 3. The requirements of this condition are in addition to those set forth in rule 4-100, Rules of Professional Conduct.

#### d. Client Trust Accounting School

Within one (1) year of the effective date of the discipline herein, Respondent must supply to the Office of Probation satisfactory proof of attendance at a session of the Ethics School Client Trust Accounting School, within the same period of time, and passage of the test given at the end of that session.



### **ATTACHMENT TO**

# STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION

IN THE MATTER OF:

**DIRK DWIGHT SHARP** 

CASE NUMBER:

13-0-12536

## FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW.

Respondent admits that the following facts are true and that he is culpable of violations of the specified statutes and/or Rules of Professional Conduct.

## Case No. 13-O-12536 (Complainant: Alicia Nunez)

#### **FACTS:**

- 1. On October 2, 2006, Luis Salinas, who was in prison convicted of attempted murder, retained Respondent for the purpose of exploring Salinas' appellate options.
- 2. At Salinas' direction, Salinas' mother, Alicia Nunez, paid Respondent advanced fees of \$25,000 by two installments on October 2, 2006 and on November 21, 2006.
- 3. Respondent sent a retainer letter to Salinas in 2006, and a letter in 2007 regarding a potential visit, and visited Salinas in 2006 and 2010.
- 4. In 2011, Respondent provided Salinas with copies of documents, including a Notice of Appeal dated May 15, 2007, an Application for Writ of Habeas Corpus dated May 5, 2009, and an Application for Writ of Habeas Corpus dated May 15, 2007, which documents were never filed with the court, and were provided to mislead Salinas into believing the work had been performed.
  - 5. Respondent performed no services of value to Salinas.
- 6. Between September 2006 and July 2013, Salinas and his family members made numerous telephone calls to Respondent, left messages inquiring about the status of Salinas' appeal, and asked that their calls be returned. Respondent received the messages but did not return any of their calls until after the present State Bar action commenced.
- 7. On July 10, 2013, Salinas terminated Respondent's employment. At the termination of his employment, Respondent did not provide Salinas with an accounting of the \$25,000 advanced fee.

#### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

8. By failing to perform any meaningful work to appeal or otherwise obtain relief from Salinas' murder conviction, Respondent intentionally, recklessly, or repeatedly failed to perform legal services with competence in willful violation of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-110(A).

- 9. By failing to respond promptly to multiple telephone messages left by Salinas and his family members, Respondent failed to respond promptly to reasonable status inquiries of a client in a matter in which Respondent had agreed to provide legal services, in willful violation of Business and Professions Code, section 6068(m).
- 10. By representing to Salinas that he had filed a Notice of Appeal and two Applications for Writ of Habeas Corpus, when he knew the representation was false and that the documents had not been submitted to or filed in any court, Respondent committed an act involving moral turpitude, dishonesty or corruption in wilful violation of Business and Professions Code section 6106.
- 11. By not providing an accounting of fees upon termination of employment, Respondent failed to render appropriate accounts to a client regarding all funds coming into Respondent's possession, in willful violation of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 4-100(B)(3).

#### AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

Harm (Std. 1.5(f)): Respondent's misconduct significantly harmed his client. The client was actually harmed by Respondent's misconduct in that his potential criminal appeal was unnecessarily delayed while the client remained incarcerated.

Multiple Acts of Misconduct (Std. 1.5(b)): By failing to competently perform any services of value to his client, failing to respond to reasonable status inquiries, attempting to mislead his client regarding his efforts to appeal Salinas' murder conviction, and by failing to provide an accounting upon termination of his employment, Respondent committed multiple acts of misconduct.

#### MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

No Prior Discipline: Although his misconduct is serious, Respondent's 25 years of practice with no prior discipline is significant. (See *Friedman v. State Bar* (1990) 50 Cal.3d 235, 245[an unblemished record for more than 20 years held to be a significant mitigating circumstance in reducing a disbarment recommendation to three years actual suspension, despite serious misconduct].)

**Pre-trial Stipulation:** Respondent is entitled to mitigation for entering into a full stipulation with the Office of Chief Trial Counsel prior to trial, thereby saving State Bar Court time and resources (See *Silva-Vidor v. State Bar* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 1071, 1079 [where mitigative credit was given for entering into a stipulation as to facts and culpability].)

### AUTHORITIES SUPPORTING DISCIPLINE.

The Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct "set forth a means for determining the appropriate disciplinary sanction in a particular case and to ensure consistency across cases dealing with similar misconduct and surrounding circumstances." (Rules Proc. of State Bar, tit. IV, Stds. for Atty. Sanctions for Prof. Misconduct, std. 1.1. All further references to Standards are to this source.) The Standards help fulfill the primary purposes of discipline, which include: protection of the public, the courts and the legal profession; maintenance of the highest professional standards; and preservation of public confidence in the legal profession. (See std. 1.1; *In re Morse* (1995) 11 Cal.4th 184, 205.)

Although not binding, the standards are entitled to "great weight" and should be followed "whenever possible" in determining level of discipline. (In re Silverton (2005) 36 Cal.4th 81, 92, quoting In re Brown (1995) 12 Cal.4th 205, 220 and In re Young (1989) 49 Cal.3d 257, 267, fn. 11.) Adherence to the standards in the great majority of cases serves the valuable purpose of eliminating disparity and assuring consistency, that is, the imposition of similar attorney discipline for instances of similar attorney misconduct. (In re Naney (1990) 51 Cal.3d 186, 190.) If a recommendation is at the high end or low end of a Standard, an explanation must be given as to how the recommendation was reached. (Std. 1.1.) "Any disciplinary recommendation that deviates from the Standards must include clear reasons for the departure." (Std. 1.1; Blair v. State Bar (1989) 49 Cal.3d 762, 776, fn. 5.)

In determining whether to impose a sanction greater or less than that specified in a given Standard, in addition to the factors set forth in the specific Standard, consideration is to be given to the primary purposes of discipline; the balancing of all aggravating and mitigating circumstances; the type of misconduct at issue; whether the client, public, legal system or profession was harmed; and the member's willingness and ability to conform to ethical responsibilities in the future. (Stds. 1.7(b) and (c).)

In this matter, Respondent admits to committing four acts of professional misconduct. Standard 1.7(a) requires that where a Respondent "commits two or more acts of misconduct and the Standards specify different sanctions for each act, the most severe sanction must be imposed."

The most severe sanction applicable to Respondent's misconduct is found in Standard 2.7, which applies to his violation of Business and Professions Code section 6106. Standard 2.7 provides that disbarment or suspension is appropriate for an act involving moral turpitude, dishonesty, fraud, corruption or concealment of a material fact. The degree of sanction depends on the magnitude of the misconduct and the extent to which the misconduct harmed or misled the victim and related to the practice of law.

In the present matter, Respondent's representation to his client that he had prepared and filed a Notice of Appeal and two Applications for a Writ of Habeas Corpus, knowing that the representation was false, was dishonest and involved moral turpitude. The client was actually harmed by Respondent's misconduct in that his potential criminal appeal was unnecessarily delayed while the client remained incarcerated. Given the magnitude of the misconduct, the fact that it directly related to the practice of law, and the extent of the resulting harm, a significant degree of sanction under Standard 2.7 is appropriate.

Respondent is entitled to mitigation for his 25 years of discipline free practice, and for entering into the present stipulation. In aggravation, Respondent committed multiple acts of misconduct and harmed his client. Considering Respondent's misconduct, his evident willingness to conform to his ethical responsibilities in the future as shown by his entering into this stipulation, and balancing the aggravating and mitigating circumstances, a one-year suspension, stayed, with two years of probation, with conditions including a six-month actual suspension, sufficiently serves the primary purposes of discipline to protect the public, the courts and the legal profession.

#### DISMISSALS.

The parties respectfully request the Court to dismiss the following alleged violations in the interest of justice:

Case No.	Count	Alleged Violation
13-O-12536	Four	Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-700(D)(2)

### COSTS OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS.

Respondent acknowledges that the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel has informed Respondent that as of February 14, 2014, the prosecution costs in this matter are \$3,419.00. 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.

#### **EXCLUSION FROM MCLE CREDIT**

Pursuant to rule 3201, Respondent may <u>not</u> receive MCLE credit for completion of State Bar Ethics School and State Bar Client Trust Accounting School (Rules Proc. of State Bar, rule 3201.)

(Do not write above this line.)		
In the Matter of DIRK DWIGHT SHARP	Case number(s): 13-0-12536	

## **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.

Print Name

R. KEVIN BUCHER Print Name

(Do not write above	re this line.)			
In the Matter DIRK DWI	of: GHT SHARP	Case Number(s): 13-O-12536		
requested disr	pulation to be fair to the parties and th nissal of counts/charges, if any, is GR	, ,		
	Supreme Court.  The stipulated facts and disposition ar  DISCIPLINE IS RECOMMENDED to the	re APPROVED and the DISCIPLINE RECOMMENDED to the re APPROVED AS MODIFIED as set forth below, and the the Supreme Court.		
	All Hearing dates are vacated.			
within 15 days stipulation. (Se	after service of this order, is granted; se rule 5.58(E) & (F), Rules of Proced	d unless: 1) a motion to withdraw or modify the stipulation, filed or 2) this court modifies or further modifies the approved ure.) The effective date of this disposition is the effective date		
Court.)	ne Court order herein, normally 30	LUCY ARMENDARIZ Judge of the State Bar Court		

#### CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

[Rules Proc. of State Bar; Rule 5.27(B); 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 San Francisco, on March 11, 2014, 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 San Francisco, California, addressed as follows:

DIRK D. SHARP LAW OFFICE OF DIRK D SHARP 61535 S HWY 97 STE 9-174 BEND, OR 97702

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

RONALD K. BUCHER, Enforcement, Los Angeles

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in San Francisco, California, on March 11, 2014.

Bernadette C.O. Molina Case Administrator State Bar Court