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State Bar Court of California Hearing Department San Francisco REPROVAL		
Counsel For The State Bar Erica L. M. Dennings Senior Trial Counsel 180 Howard Street San Francisco, CA 94105 (415) 538-2285 Bar # 145755	Case Number(s): 14-O-02866-LMA	For Court use only PUBLIC MATTER FILED <i>R</i> JUN 30 2015 STATE BAR COURT CLERK'S OFFICE SAN FRANCISCO
In Pro Per Respondent Brian Yung-Yen Lee PivotPointLaw 303 Twin Dolphin Drive, Suite 600 Redwood City, CA 94065 (650) 251-4200 Bar # 197233	Submitted to: Settlement Judge STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING PUBLIC REPROVAL <input type="checkbox"/> PREVIOUS STIPULATION REJECTED	
In the Matter of: BRIAN YUNG-YEN LEE Bar # 197233 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 **December 7, 1998**.
- (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."

(Effective January 1, 2014)

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- (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 are added to membership fee for calendar year following effective date of discipline (public reproof).
 - Case ineligible for costs (private reproof).
 - Costs are to be paid in equal amounts prior to February 1 for the following membership years: (Hardship, special circumstances or other good cause per rule 5.132, Rules of Procedure.) If Respondent fails to pay any installment as described above, or as may be modified by the State Bar Court, the remaining balance is due and payable immediately.
 - Costs are waived in part as set forth in a separate attachment entitled "Partial Waiver of Costs".
 - Costs are entirely waived.
- (9) The parties understand that:
- (a) A private reproof 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 official 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 reproof was imposed is not available to the public except as part of the record of any subsequent proceeding in which it is introduced as evidence of a prior record of discipline under the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar.
 - (b) A private reproof 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 reproof 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 [Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct, standards 1.2(f) & 1.5]. Facts supporting aggravating circumstances are required.

- (1) Prior record of discipline
- (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

(Do not write above this line.)

- (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 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) **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. See attachment to stipulation, at p. 7
- (8) **Restitution:** Respondent failed to make restitution.
- (9) **No aggravating circumstances** are involved.

Additional aggravating circumstances:

C. Mitigating Circumstances [see standards 1.2(g) & 1.6]. 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, 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) **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 with a good faith belief that was honestly held and reasonable.

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- (8) **Emotional/Physical Difficulties:** 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) **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 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) **Rehabilitation:** Considerable time has passed since the acts of professional misconduct occurred followed by subsequent rehabilitation.
- (13) **No mitigating circumstances are involved.**

Additional mitigating circumstances:

No Prior Discipline: See attachment to stipulation, at p. 7
Pretrial stipulation: See attachment to stipulation, at p. 7

D. Discipline:

- (1) **Private reproof (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 reproof (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 one (1) year.
- (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.

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- (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 reprobation. 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 reprobation 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 reprobation.
- (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 reprobation.
- No MPRE recommended. Reason:

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

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Substance Abuse Conditions | <input type="checkbox"/> Law Office Management Conditions |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Conditions | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Conditions |

F. Other Conditions Negotiated by the Parties:

ATTACHMENT TO
STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION

IN THE MATTER OF: BRIAN YUNG-YEN LEE

CASE NUMBER: 14-O-02866-LMA

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. 14-O-2866 (Complainant: Chan)

FACTS:

1. On July 15, 2011 Zheng Chan ("Chan") hired respondent to represent Bob's Broiler, Inc. in negotiations in a complex multi-party, multi-lawsuit litigation, *Chen v. Jew et al* San Francisco Superior Court case number CGC 11-507561. Chan and his ex-sister-in-law (Phoung Tran, "Sophia") were the two shareholders of Bob's Broiler, Inc. Between July 15, 2011 and September 2011, respondent performed work on the case including engaging in settlement negotiations and representing Bob's Broiler, Inc. at a mediation on July 27, 2011 at which time the parties reached a global settlement.
2. On September 19, 2011 Chan executed a global settlement agreement.
3. Between September 19, 2011 and December 20, 2011, a disagreement arose between Chan and respondent regarding the settlement. As a result of the disagreement, on December 20, 2011, Chan sent respondent a letter discharging him.
4. On December 22, 2011, respondent spoke with Chan's new attorney regarding the case.
5. On December 22, 2011, respondent met with Chan and gave him a bill for \$37,473.19, the case file, and a substitution of attorney that he had signed for Chan to execute and file. Respondent offered to reduce his bill to \$20,000, but Chan refused that offer and told respondent he would pay \$10,000. Chan and respondent did not reach an agreement regarding respondent's bill.
6. On December 23 and 27, 2011, respondent spoke with Chan's new attorney about the case.
7. Thereafter, respondent took no steps to assure that the substitution of attorney was filed with the court, and the substitution was never filed, therefore, he remained attorney of record. However, respondent did not perform any further legal work on Chan's behalf.
8. On August 15, 2012, respondent filed an involuntary chapter 7 bankruptcy petition against Bob's Broiler as a debtor. *In re Bob's Broiler, Inc.*, United States District for the Northern District of California, case number 12-32384. Respondent filed the petition to obtain his fees for representing Bob's Broiler, Inc., in the *Chen v. Jew* case. At the time respondent filed the involuntary petition against

Bob's Broiler, respondent was not aware that the substitution of attorney had not been filed and that he was still the attorney of record. By filing the involuntary bankruptcy petition against a current client, respondent created a situation in which his continued employment would result in the violation of the State Bar Act. When respondent became aware that he was still attorney of record for Bob's Broiler, Inc., he filed a motion to withdraw as attorney, which the court granted on October 15, 2012.

9. On June 6, 2014 and July 7, 2014, a State Bar investigator sent letters to respondent requesting a written response to the allegations in the Chan matter. Respondent received the letters shortly after they were sent. Thereafter, respondent failed to provide a written response to the letters.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW:

10. By filing an involuntary bankruptcy petition against his client, Bob's Broiler, Inc., while he was still attorney of record for Bob's Broiler, Inc. in a state court lawsuit, respondent failed to withdraw from employment when respondent knew or should have known that continued employment would result in a violation of the Rules of Professional Conduct or of the State Bar Act in wilful violation of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-700(B)(2).

11. By failing to provide a written response to the investigator's letters, respondent failed to cooperate in a State Bar investigation in wilful violation of Business and Professions Code, section 6068(i).

AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

Multiple Acts of Misconduct (Std. 1.5(b)): Respondent committed two acts of misconduct in a single client matter.

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

No Prior Discipline: Respondent is entitled to mitigation for having practiced law for 14 years without discipline. (*In the Matter of Riordan* (Review Dept. 2007) 5 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rapt. 41, 49.)

Pretrial Stipulation: Respondent is entitled to mitigation for entering into a stipulation with the Office of Chief Trial Counsel prior to trial in the above referenced disciplinary matter, thereby saving State Bar Court time and resources. (*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 Silvertown* (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 two acts of professional misconduct. Standard 2.15, applicable to respondent's violation of Rules of Professional Conduct, rule 3-700(B)(2), calls for a reproof or up to 3 year suspension, as an appropriate sanction.

Here, respondent has belatedly recognized that he should have assured that the substitution of attorney was filed and that he should have responded to the investigator's letters. He is now accepting responsibility for his failures by entering into a pretrial stipulation. As this is a failure to withdraw from a matter where the client had already terminated respondent, there is no harm and the discipline should therefore be on the low end of the range specified in 2.15.

Considering the misconduct, aggravating and mitigating factors, and application of the standards to the facts of this case, a public reproof is the appropriate discipline for this matter.

DISMISSALS.

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

<u>Case No.</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Alleged Violation</u>
14-O-02866	2	6068(a)
14-O-02866	3	6068(d)
14-O-02866	4	6106

EXCLUSION FROM MCLE CREDIT

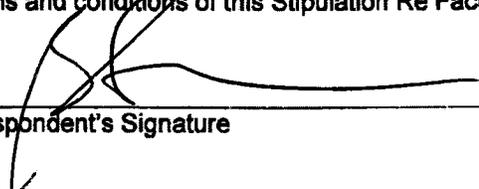
Pursuant to rule 3201, Respondent may not receive MCLE credit for completion of State Bar Ethics School. (Rules Proc. of State Bar, rule 3201.)

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In the Matter of: BRIAN YUNG-YEN LEE	Case number(s): 14-O-02866-LMA
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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 Facts, Conclusions of Law, and Disposition.

<u>6/11/15</u> Date	 Respondent's Signature	<u>BRIAN YUNG-YEN LEE</u> Print Name
<u>24 June 2015</u> Date	 Deputy Trial Counsel's Signature	<u>ERICA L. M. DENNINGS</u> Print Name

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In the Matter of: BRIAN YUNG-YEN LEE	Case Number(s): 14-O-02866-LMA
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REPROVAL ORDER

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

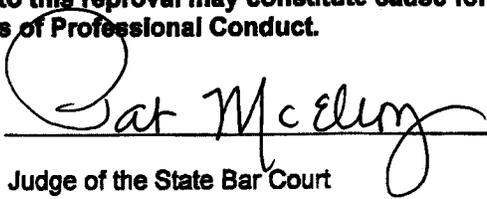
- The stipulated facts and disposition are APPROVED AND THE REPROVAL IMPOSED.
- The stipulated facts and disposition are APPROVED AS MODIFIED as set forth below, and the REPROVAL IMPOSED.
- All court dates in the Hearing Department are vacated.

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 5.58(E) & (F), 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 reproof may constitute cause for a separate proceeding for willful breach of rule 1-110, Rules of Professional Conduct.

Date

June 29, 2015


Judge of the State Bar Court

DECLARATION OF SERVICE

by

U.S. FIRST-CLASS MAIL / U.S. CERTIFIED MAIL / OVERNIGHT DELIVERY / FACSIMILE-ELECTRONIC TRANSMISSION

CASE NUMBER(s): 14-O-02866-LMA

I, the undersigned, am over the age of eighteen (18) years and not a party to the within action, whose business address and place of employment is the State Bar of California, 180 Howard Street, San Francisco, California 94105, declare that:

- on the date shown below, I caused to be served a true copy of the within document described as follows:

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

- By U.S. First-Class Mail: (CCP §§ 1013 and 1013(a))
By U.S. Certified Mail: (CCP §§ 1013 and 1013(a))
By Overnight Delivery: (CCP §§ 1013(c) and 1013(d))
By Fax Transmission: (CCP §§ 1013(e) and 1013(f))
By Electronic Service: (CCP § 1010.6)

- (for U.S. First-Class Mail) in a sealed envelope placed for collection and mailing at San Francisco, addressed to each: (see below)
(for Certified Mail) in a sealed envelope placed for collection and mailing as certified mail, return receipt requested, Article No.: at San Francisco, addressed to: (see below)
(for Overnight Delivery) together with a copy of this declaration, in an envelope, or package designated by UPS, Tracking No.: addressed to: (see below)

Table with 4 columns: Person Served, Business-Residential Address, Fax Number, COUNSEL COPY. Row 1: Brian Lee, PivotPointLaw 303 Twin Dolphin Drive Suite 600 Redwood City, CA 94065, Electronic Address, blee@pivotpointlaw.com

via inter-office mail regularly processed and maintained by the State Bar of California addressed to:

N/A

I am readily familiar with the State Bar of California's practice for collection and processing of correspondence for mailing with the United States Postal Service, and overnight delivery by the United Parcel Service (UPS). In the ordinary course of the State Bar of California's practice, correspondence collected and processed by the State Bar of California would be deposited with the United States Postal Service that same day, and for overnight delivery, deposited with delivery fees paid or provided for, with UPS that same day.

I am aware that on motion of the party served, service is presumed invalid if postal cancellation date or postage meter date on the envelope or package is more than one day after date of deposit for mailing contained in the affidavit.

I declare under penalty of perjury, under the laws of the State of California, that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed at San Francisco, California, on the date shown below.

DATED: June 24, 2015

SIGNED: Leon Thomas, Jr. Declarant

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 June 30, 2015, 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:

BRIAN Y. LEE
PIVOTPOINTLAW
303 TWIN DOLPHIN DR STE 600
REDWOOD CITY, CA 94065

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

ERICA L. M. DENNINGS, Enforcement, San Francisco

TERRIE L. GOLDADE, Probation, Los Angeles

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in San Francisco, California, on June 30, 2015.



Bernadette C.O. Molina
Case Administrator
State Bar Court