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State Bar Court of California Hearing Department Los Angeles STAYED SUSPENSION		
Counsel For The State Bar Ann J. Kim Deputy Trial Counsel 845 S. Figueroa St. Los Angeles, CA 90017 (213) 765-1230 Bar # 259222	Case Number(s): 15-O-11116	For Court use only <div style="text-align: center;"> PUBLIC MATTER FILED DEC 14 2015 STATE BAR COURT CLERK'S OFFICE LOS ANGELES </div>
Counsel For Respondent Susan L. Margolis Margolis & Margolis LLP 2000 Riverside Dr. Los Angeles, CA 90039 (323) 953-5996 Bar # 104629	Submitted to: Settlement Judge STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION AND ORDER APPROVING STAYED SUSPENSION; NO ACTUAL SUSPENSION <input type="checkbox"/> PREVIOUS STIPULATION REJECTED	
In the Matter of: ERIC J. SPIEGELMAN Bar # 224035 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 22, 2002**.
- (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 10 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."

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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.
 - ☒ Costs are to be paid in equal amounts prior to February 1 for the following membership years: **two billing cycles following the effective date of the Supreme Court order in this matter.** (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.

B. Aggravating Circumstances [Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct, standards 1.2(h) & 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
 - (e) ☐ If Respondent has two or more incidents of prior discipline, use space provided below or a separate attachment entitled "Prior Discipline."
- (2) ☐ **Intentional/Bad Faith/Dishonesty:** Respondent's misconduct was dishonest, intentional, or surrounded by, or followed by bad faith.
- (3) ☐ **Misrepresentation:** Respondent's misconduct was surrounded by, or followed by misrepresentation.
- (4) ☐ **Concealment:** Respondent's misconduct was surrounded by, or followed by concealment.
- (5) ☐ **Overreaching:** Respondent's misconduct was surrounded by, or followed by overreaching.
- (6) ☐ **Uncharged Violations:** Respondent's conduct involves uncharged violations of the Business and Professions Code, or the Rules of Professional Conduct.
- (7) ☐ **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..

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- (8) ☐ **Harm:** Respondent's misconduct harmed significantly a client, the public, or the administration of justice.
- (9) ☐ **Indifference:** Respondent demonstrated indifference toward rectification of or atonement for the consequences of his or her misconduct.
- (10) ☐ **Candor/Lack of Cooperation:** Respondent displayed a lack of candor and cooperation to victims of his/her misconduct, or to the State Bar during disciplinary investigations or proceedings.
- (11) ☐ **Multiple Acts:** Respondent's current misconduct evidences multiple acts of wrongdoing.
- (12) ☐ **Pattern:** Respondent's current misconduct demonstrates a pattern of misconduct.
- (13) ☐ **Restitution:** Respondent failed to make restitution.
- (14) ☐ **Vulnerable Victim:** The victim(s) of Respondent's misconduct was/were highly vulnerable.
- (15) ☒ **No aggravating circumstances** are involved.

Additional aggravating circumstances

C. Mitigating Circumstances [see standards 1.2(i) & 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 likely to recur.
- (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 or to the State Bar during disciplinary investigations and proceedings.
- (4) ☐ **Remorse:** Respondent promptly took objective steps demonstrating spontaneous 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 objectively reasonable.
- (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.

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- (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. **See attachment, at page 6.**
- (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, at page 7.

Community Service: see attachment, at page 7.

Remorse/Recognition of Wrongdoing: see attachment, at page 7.

Prefiling Stipulation: see attachment, at page 7.

D. Discipline:

- (1) ☒ **Stayed Suspension:**
- (a) ☒ Respondent must be suspended from the practice of law for a period of **one (1) year**.
- i. ☐ and until Respondent shows proof satisfactory to the State Bar Court of rehabilitation and fitness to practice and present learning and ability in the general law pursuant to standard 1.2(c)(1), Standards for Attorney Sanctions for Professional Misconduct.
- ii. ☐ and until Respondent pays restitution as set forth in the Financial Conditions form attached to this stipulation.
- iii. ☐ and until Respondent does the following: .

The above-referenced suspension is stayed.

- (2) ☒ **Probation:**

Respondent is placed on probation for a period of **one (1) year**, which will commence upon the effective date of the Supreme Court order in this matter. (See rule 9.18 California Rules of Court.)

E. Additional Conditions of Probation:

- (1) ☒ During the probation period, Respondent must comply with the provisions of the State Bar Act and Rules of Professional Conduct.
- (2) ☒ 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.

- (3) ☒ 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.
- (4) ☒ 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 conditions of probation during the preceding calendar quarter. Respondent must also state 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 days, that report must be submitted on the next 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 period of probation and no later than the last day of probation.

- (5) ☐ 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.
- (6) ☒ 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.
- (7) ☒ 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 State Bar Ethics School, and passage of the test given at the end of that session.
- ☐ No Ethics School recommended. Reason: .
- (8) ☐ 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.
- (9) ☐ 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:

- (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 within one year. **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.**

☐ No MPRE recommended. Reason: .

- (2) ☐ **Other Conditions:**

ATTACHMENT TO
STIPULATION RE FACTS, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND DISPOSITION

IN THE MATTER OF: ERIC J. SPIEGELMAN

CASE NUMBER: 15-O-11116

FACTS AND CONCLUSIONS OF LAW.

Respondent admits that the following facts are true and that he is culpable violating the specified statute.

Case No. 15-O-11116 (State Bar Investigation)

FACTS:

1. As a member of the State Bar of California, respondent was required to complete 25 hours of minimum continuing legal education ("MCLE") during the period commencing on February 1, 2011 and ending on January 31, 2014 (the "compliance period").
2. On February 3, 2014, respondent reported under penalty of perjury to the State Bar that he was in compliance with the MCLE requirements, and, in particular, that he had completed 25 hours of MCLE during the compliance period.
3. At the time he reported to the State Bar that he was in compliance with the MCLE requirements, respondent was grossly negligent in not knowing that he was not in compliance with the MCLE requirements. Respondent completed six (6) hours of qualifying MCLE courses, yet he had over 100 hours of "self-study" in the area of transportation, regulation and taxi-cab law which he believed would qualify. They did not, however.
4. Subsequently, respondent took MCLE courses necessary to bring himself into compliance after being contacted by the Office of Member Records and Compliance regarding an MCLE audit. Respondent timely complied with the audit.

CONCLUSION OF LAW:

5. By reporting to the State Bar that he was in compliance with the MCLE requirements when he was not in compliance with the MCLE requirements, respondent committed an act involving dishonesty, by gross negligence, in willful violation of Business and Professions Code section 6106.

MITIGATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

Good Character (Std. 1.6(f)): Respondent provided eight letters attesting to his good character from a wide range of references in the legal and general communities who are aware of the full extent of the misconduct. References include, among others, two attorneys, the head of a major entertainment conference, the vice president of a public relations company, a writer for the New Yorker, a film/television producer, and a journalist/screenwriter. Many declarants affirm respondent's integrity and public service.

Additional Mitigating Circumstances:

No Prior Discipline: Respondent has been an attorney since 2002. However, respondent was not practicing law from 2008 to 2012. Respondent's eight years of discipline-free practice is worth slight mitigation. (*Kelly v. State Bar* (1988) 45 Cal.3d 649, 657 [7.5 years not especially commendable].)

Community Service: Respondent has served on the Los Angeles Board of Taxicab Commissioners since early 2014 and was elected president of the Commission in July 2014. All of the work with the commission is voluntary and respondent donates approximately 10 hours per week. (*In the Matter of Respondent K* (Review Dept. 1993) 2 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 335, 359 [civic service recognized as a mitigating circumstance].)

Remorse/Recognition of Wrongdoing: Respondent instituted several strategies to ensure that he completes future MCLE requirements and maintains records. Respondent has already located and identified courses in the required subjects he will need to complete to be compliant in the next compliance period. Also, respondent created a computer-based filing system specifically to manage his MCLE documents and classes going forward. Paper originals will be kept in respondent's filing cabinet. (*In the Matter of Yee* (Review Dept. 2014) 5 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 330 [mitigative credit given for acknowledging insufficient record-keeping practices and changing them].)

Prefiling Stipulation: Respondent has entered into this stipulation to resolve the matter before the filing of disciplinary charges and should receive mitigative credit for his admission of culpability and consent to the imposition of discipline, thus saving limited State Bar resources and acknowledging and accepting responsibility for his misconduct. (*Silva-Vidor v. State Bar* (1989) 49 Cal.3d 1071, 1079 [mitigative credit 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. (Std. 1.7(b) and (c).)

Standard 2.11 applies to respondent's false statement regarding his MCLE compliance and provides that "[d]isbarment or actual suspension is the presumed sanction for an act of moral turpitude, [or] dishonesty" and that the "degree of sanction depends on the magnitude of the misconduct; the extent to which the misconduct harmed or misled the victim, which may include the adjudicator; the impact on the administration of justice, if any; and the extent to which the misconduct related to the member's practice of law."

Although respondent's failure to accurately report his MCLE compliance was related to the practice of law, it was a one-time error and caused by his belief that he had sufficient credits to satisfy the 25 hour requirement. Respondent receives some mitigation for eight years of discipline-free practice. Further, respondent provided eight letters attesting to his good character, he is engaged in community service, and his misconduct caused no harm to the public or the judicial system. Most importantly, respondent accepted responsibility for his wrongdoing, rectified the situation by completing the required hours after discovering that he was not in compliance, and has implemented a corrective plan to avoid future problems. (*In the Matter of Yee* (Review Dept. 2014) 5 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 330.) Considering the circumstances, a lesser discipline than called for in Standard 2.7 is appropriate.

Standard 1.7(c) provides that a deviation from a presumed level of discipline is appropriate in "cases of minor misconduct, where there is little or no injury to a client, the public, the legal system, or the profession and where the record demonstrates that the member is willing and has the ability to conform to ethical responsibilities in the future." Such are the circumstances here. Given respondent's mitigation, the lack of aggravating circumstances, and respondent's corrective plan to avoid future problems, a period of stayed suspension will adequately serve the goals of attorney discipline.

Case law supports the level of discipline. In *In the Matter of Yee* (Review Dept. 2014) 5 Cal. State Bar Ct. Rptr. 330, Yee affirmed her MCLE compliance when she had not taken any courses during the relevant reporting period. Yee mistakenly recalled that she had completed the courses and did not check or maintain any records to confirm if her recollection was accurate. The Review Department found that Yee's failure to verify records before submitting a statement of compliance amounted to moral turpitude based on gross negligence. The Review Department found no aggravation, but did find compelling mitigation consisting of no prior record of discipline, candor/cooperation, good character, remorse/recognition of wrongdoing, pro bono work and community service, and no harm to the public or the judicial system. Due to the compelling mitigation, the lack of aggravating circumstances, and Yee's genuine recognition of wrongdoing, the Review Department recommended discipline consisting of a public reproof.

Similar to *Yee*, respondent submitted a false statement regarding his MCLE compliance. Respondent was grossly negligent in affirming under penalty of perjury that he had complied with his MCLE requirements, when in fact he had only completed six qualifying hours. Respondent now acknowledges that his affirmation of having complied with his MCLE requirements during the compliance period was incorrect. Respondent had over 100 hours of "self-study", which did not qualify for MCLE credit. The present matter is distinguishable from *Yee* in that respondent not only made an affirmation without confirming its accuracy, but did not ensure that he fully understood what he was declaring under penalty

of perjury. For these reasons, and because Yee had slightly more mitigation, discipline higher than that imposed in *Yee* is warranted.

COSTS OF DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDINGS.

Respondent acknowledges that the Office of the Chief Trial Counsel has informed respondent that as of November 24, 2015, the prosecution costs in this matter are \$3,066.00. 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 not receive MCLE credit for completion of Ethics School ordered as a condition of discipline. (Rules of Proc. of State Bar, rule 3201.)

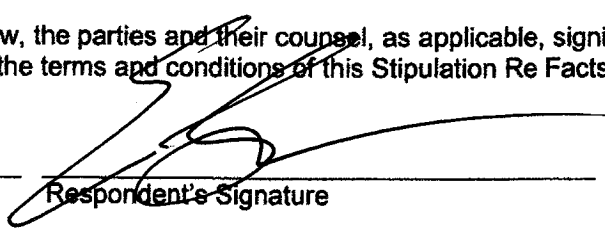

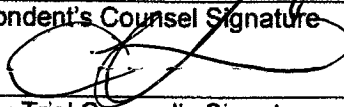
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In the Matter of:
SPIEGELMAN, ERIC J.

Case number(s):
15-O-11116

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>12/3/15</u>		<u>ERIC J. SPIEGELMAN</u>
Date	Respondent's Signature	Print Name
<u>12/3/15</u>		<u>SUSAN L. MARGOLIS</u>
Date	Respondent's Counsel Signature	Print Name
<u>12/8/2015</u>		<u>ANN J. KIM</u>
Date	Deputy Trial Counsel's Signature	Print Name

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In the Matter of:
SPIEGELMAN, ERIC J.

Case Number(s):
15-O-11116

STAYED SUSPENSION ORDER


Finding the stipulation to be fair to the parties and that it adequately protects the public, 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 DISCIPLINE RECOMMENDED to the Supreme Court.
- ☐ The stipulated facts and disposition are APPROVED AS MODIFIED as set forth below, and the DISCIPLINE IS RECOMMENDED to the Supreme Court.
- ☐ All Hearing dates 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.) **The effective date of this disposition is the effective date of the Supreme Court order herein, normally 30 days after file date. (See rule 9.18(a), California Rules of Court.)**

12/11/15

Date



DONALD F. MILES
Judge of the State Bar Court

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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 Los Angeles, on December 14, 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 Los Angeles, California, addressed as follows:

SUSAN LYNN MARGOLIS
MARGOLIS & MARGOLIS LLP
2000 RIVERSIDE DR
LOS ANGELES, CA 90039

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

ANN KIM, Enforcement, Los Angeles

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in Los Angeles, California, on December 14, 2015.



Rose M. Luthi
Case Administrator
State Bar Court