



# PUBLIC MATTER

FILED

JUN 22 2017

STATE BAR COURT OF CALIFORNIA

STATE BAR COURT CLERK'S OFFICE  
SAN FRANCISCO

HEARING DEPARTMENT – SAN FRANCISCO

In the Matter of	)	Case No. 15-O-14391-PEM
	)	
WILLIAM HARDY NOBLE,	)	
	)	DECISION AND ORDER OF
A Member of the State Bar, No. 201194.	)	INVOLUNTARY INACTIVE
	)	ENROLLMENT
	)	

Respondent William Hardy Noble (respondent) was charged with three counts of violation of the Business and Professions Code.<sup>1</sup> He failed to participate, either in person or through counsel, and his default was entered. The Office of Chief Trial Counsel (State Bar) filed a petition for disbarment under rule 5.85 of the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar.<sup>2</sup>

Rule 5.85 provides the procedure to follow when an attorney fails to participate in a disciplinary proceeding after receiving adequate notice and opportunity. The rule provides that, if an attorney's default is entered for failing to respond to the notice of disciplinary charges (NDC) and the attorney fails to have the default set aside or vacated within 90 days, the State Bar will file a petition requesting the court to recommend the attorney's disbarment.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all further references to section(s) refer to provisions of the Business and Professions Code.

<sup>2</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all references to rules are to this source.

<sup>3</sup> If the court determines that any due process requirements are not satisfied, including adequate notice to the attorney, it must deny the petition for disbarment and take other appropriate action to ensure that the matter is promptly resolved. (Rule 5.85(F)(2).)

In the instant case, the court concludes that the requirements of rule 5.85 have been satisfied and, therefore, grants the petition and recommends that respondent be disbarred from the practice of law.

### **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

Respondent was admitted to practice law in California on June 7, 1999, and has been a member since then.

#### **Procedural Requirements Have Been Satisfied**

On December 8, 2016, the State Bar properly filed and served a notice of disciplinary charges (NDC) on respondent by certified mail, return receipt requested, to his membership records address. The NDC notified respondent that his failure to participate in the proceeding would result in a disbarment recommendation. (Rule 5.41.) A courtesy copy of the NDC was also sent to respondent by regular first class mail to his membership records address. On December 12, 2016, the State Bar received a return receipt; but the signature on the receipt was illegible.

On January 6, 2017, the State Bar attempted to reach respondent by telephone at his official membership records telephone number and by email, but was unsuccessful. The number was not in service and the State Bar received no response from respondent.

Respondent failed to file a response to the NDC. On January 9, 2017, the State Bar properly filed and served a motion for entry of respondent's default by certified mail, return receipt requested. The return receipt was returned on January 11, 2017, with the signature of "Jason Pool," identified on the receipt as an agent of the intended recipient. The motion complied with all the requirements for a default, including a supporting declaration of reasonable diligence by the State Bar deputy trial counsel declaring the additional steps taken to provide notice to respondent. (Rule 5.80.) The motion also notified respondent that, if he did not timely

move to set aside his default, the court would recommend his disbarment. Respondent did not file a response to the motion, and his default was entered on January 27, 2017. The order entering the default was served on respondent at his membership records address by certified mail, return receipt requested. The court also ordered respondent's involuntary inactive enrollment as a member of the State Bar under Business and Professions Code section 6007, subdivision (e), effective three days after service of the order. He has remained inactively enrolled since that time.

Respondent did not seek to have his default set aside or vacated. (Rule 5.83(C)(1) [attorney has 90 days to file motion to set aside default].)

On May 8, 2017, the State Bar properly filed and served the petition for disbarment on respondent at his official membership records address. As required by rule 5.85(A), the State Bar reported in the petition that: (1) there has been no contact with respondent since his default was entered; (2) there are no investigations or disciplinary charges pending against respondent; (3) respondent has no prior record of discipline; and (4) the Client Security Fund has not paid any claims as a result of respondent's misconduct.

Respondent has not responded to the petition for disbarment or moved to set aside or vacate the default. The case was submitted for decision on June 5, 2017.

#### **The Admitted Factual Allegations Warrant the Imposition of Discipline**

Upon entry of respondent's default, the factual allegations in the NDC are deemed admitted and no further proof is required to establish the truth of such facts. (Rule 5.82.) As set forth below in greater detail, the factual allegations in the NDC support the conclusion that respondent is culpable as charged and, therefore, violated a statute, rule or court order that would warrant the imposition of discipline. (Rule 5.85(F)(1)(d).)

Count 1 – Respondent willfully violated section 6068, subdivision (j) (failure to update membership address), by failing to notify the State Bar of the change in his address within 30 days.

Count 2 – Respondent willfully violated section 6068, subdivision (i) (failure to cooperate with the State Bar in a disciplinary investigation), by failing to provide a substantive response to the State Bar's October 19, 2015, March 15, 2016, and October 14, 2016 letters.

Count 3 – Respondent willfully violated section 6160 (moral turpitude, dishonesty, or corruption), by falsely reporting under the penalty of perjury to the State Bar that respondent had fully complied with respondent's minimum continuing legal education requirements for the period of February 1, 2011, to January 31, 2014.

**Disbarment Is Recommended**

Based on the above, the court concludes that the requirements of rule 5.85(F) have been satisfied, and respondent's disbarment is recommended. In particular:

- (1) The NDC was properly served on respondent under rule 5.25;
- (2) Reasonable diligence was used to notify respondent of the proceedings prior to the entry of his default;
- (3) The default was properly entered under rule 5.80; and
- (4) The factual allegations in the NDC, deemed admitted by the entry of the default, support a finding that respondent violated a statute, rule or court order that would warrant the imposition of discipline.

Despite adequate notice and opportunity, respondent failed to participate in this disciplinary proceeding. As set forth in the Rules of Procedure of the State Bar, the court recommends his disbarment.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Disbarment

The court recommends that respondent **William Hardy Noble**, State Bar number 201194, be disbarred from the practice of law in the State of California and that his name be stricken from the roll of attorneys.

### California Rules of Court, Rule 9.20

The court also recommends that respondent be ordered to comply with the requirements of California Rules of Court, rule 9.20, and to perform the acts specified in subdivisions (a) and (c) of that rule within 30 and 40 days, respectively, after the effective date of the Supreme Court order in this proceeding.

### Costs

The court further recommends that costs be awarded to the State Bar in accordance with Business and Professions Code section 6086.10, such costs being enforceable both as provided in Business and Professions Code section 6140.7 and as a money judgment.

## ORDER OF INVOLUNTARY INACTIVE ENROLLMENT

In accordance with Business and Professions Code section 6007, subdivision (c)(4), the court orders **William Hardy Noble**, State Bar number 201194, be involuntarily enrolled as an inactive member of the State Bar of California, effective three calendar days after the service of this decision and order. (Rule 5.111(D).)

Dated: June 22, 2017

  
PAT McELROY  
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 June 22, 2017, I deposited a true copy of the following document(s):


### DECISION AND ORDER OF INVOLUNTARY INACTIVE ENROLLMENT

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:
- WILLIAM H. NOBLE  
1618 SULLIVAN AVE #466  
DALY CITY, CA 94015
- ☐ by certified mail, No. , with return receipt requested, through the United States Postal Service at , California, addressed as follows:
- ☐ by overnight mail at , California, addressed as follows:
- ☐ by fax transmission, at fax number . No error was reported by the fax machine that I used.
- ☐ By personal service by leaving the documents in a sealed envelope or package clearly labeled to identify the attorney being served with a receptionist or a person having charge of the attorney's office, addressed as follows:
- ☒ by interoffice mail through a facility regularly maintained by the State Bar of California addressed as follows:

Lauren M Williams, Enforcement, San Francisco

I hereby certify that the foregoing is true and correct. Executed in San Francisco, California, on June 22, 2017.

  
George Hue  
Case Administrator  
State Bar Court