

People v. Christopher Bursum Gaty. 13PDJo49. December 23, 2013.

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge approved the parties' conditional admission of misconduct and suspended Christopher Bursum Gaty (Attorney Registration Number 23192) for three years. The suspension took effect December 23, 2013.

From 2009 to 2012, Gaty committed over ten types of offenses in four client matters: he failed to act with reasonable diligence when representing three of these clients; did not keep two clients reasonably informed about their cases; failed to respond to court orders in all four cases; and neglected to return client property upon termination in one matter. Gaty also knowingly converted one of his client's funds, failed to provide that client an accounting, and refused to return her file when requested. Further, he failed to pay outstanding invoices to a court reporter for transcripts that he had ordered. He then failed to cooperate in the resulting disciplinary proceedings in each of these matters. At all relevant times, Gaty suffered from personal and emotional problems and a chemical dependency, all of which significantly contributed to his misconduct. Gaty has since reimbursed the funds he converted; he has also since paid the court reporter for her fees.

Through his misconduct, Gaty violated Colo. RPC 1.3 (a lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness when representing a client); Colo. RPC 1.4(a)(3) (a lawyer shall keep a client reasonably informed about the status of the matter); Colo. RPC 1.4(a)(4) (a lawyer shall promptly comply with reasonable requests for information); Colo. RPC 1.15(a) (a lawyer shall safeguard client property); Colo. RPC 1.15(b) (a lawyer shall promptly provide a full accounting); Colo. RPC 1.15(c) (a lawyer shall keep client property separate until there is a severance of the client's interest); Colo. RPC 1.16(d) (a lawyer shall surrender all papers and property of a client upon termination); Colo. RPC 3.4(c) (a lawyer shall not knowingly disobey an obligation under the rules of a tribunal); Colo. RPC 8.1(b) (a lawyer has a duty to cooperate with disciplinary investigations); Colo. RPC 8.4(c) (a lawyer shall not engage in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation); and Colo. RPC 8.4(d) (a lawyer shall not engage in conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice).