

LEGAL AND JUDICIAL ETHICS

SHREVEPORT BAR ASSOCIATION

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**SCOTT J. CRICHTON
Scott J. Crichton Law, LLC
(Shreveport and New Orleans)**

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FOUNDATIONAL PRINCIPLES AND COMMITMENTS

Lawyer's Oath

I solemnly swear (or affirm) I will support the Constitution of the United States and the Constitution of the State of Louisiana;
I will maintain the respect due to courts of justice and judicial officers;
I will not counsel or maintain any suit or proceeding which shall appear to me to be unjust nor any defense except such as I believe to be honestly debatable under the law of the land;
I will employ for the purpose of maintaining the causes confided to me such means only as are consistent with truth and honor and will never seek to mislead the judge or jury by any artifice or false statement of fact or law;
I will maintain the confidence and preserve inviolate the secrets of my client and will accept no compensation in connection with a client's business except from the client or with the client's knowledge and approval;
To opposing parties and their counsel, I pledge fairness, integrity, and civility, not only in court, but also in all written and oral communications;
I will abstain from all offensive personality and advance no fact prejudicial to the honor or reputation of a party or witness unless required by the justice of the cause with which I am charged;
I will never reject from any consideration personal to myself the cause of the defenseless or oppressed or delay any person's cause for lucre or malice.
So help me God.

Judge's Oath

I, _____, do solemnly swear that I will support the constitution and laws of the United States and the constitution and laws of this state and that I will faithfully and impartially discharge and perform all the duties incumbent on me as Judge: _____, according to the best of my ability and understanding, so help me God.

Louisiana Supreme Court Mission Statement

To preserve the integrity of the judiciary, to build and maintain public trust, to provide effective and efficient administration of justice in the Supreme Court, to ensure proper administration and performance of all courts under Supreme Court authority, and to ensure the highest professional conduct, integrity, and competence of the bench and bar.

PART I: RECENT AMENDMENTS TO RULES OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT and SUPREME COURT RULES

Amendment to Canon 7E of the Code of Judicial Conduct:

By order dated March 12, 2025, the Court amended Canon 7E of the Code of Judicial Conduct to increase the campaign contribution retention limits (given the recent increase in campaign contribution limits by the Legislature), to make clear that the campaign contribution retention limit for any Major Office subject to multiple party primary elections is applied as a separate limit for the party primary and the general election, to make clear that the funds loaned by a candidate to his/her campaign committee are not subject to the retention limits, and to make the definitions of "Major office" and "District office" consistent with the definitions of those terms (as they pertain to judicial officers) in the Election Code.

Amendment of Louisiana Supreme Court Rule IX:

Effective June 1, 2024, the Court amended LASC Rule IX, Section 1, to explicitly provide for the filing of an opposition to an application for rehearing. Under the revised rule, such oppositions must be filed within seven (7) days of the date of the acknowledgement letter issued by the Court regarding the filing of the rehearing application, and no extensions of the deadline will be granted.

Amendment of Louisiana Supreme Court Rule X:

Effective April 1, 2024, the Court amended LASC Rule X, Section 6 to extend the deadline for filing an opposition to a writ application from fifteen (15) days to thirty (30) days, but with the conditions that extensions of time will only be granted for truly exceptional circumstances where the party can demonstrate through clear and convincing evidence that the inability to file the opposition timely was due to circumstances beyond the party's control.

Amendment of Louisiana Supreme Court Rule XXXVI:

By Order dated September 14, 2023, with an effective date of October 1, 2023, the Court amended LASC Rule XXXVI to align the rule with the recusal requirements of Louisiana Code of Civil Procedure article 153(C) and Louisiana Code of Criminal Procedure article 672(B) and to clarify that the procedure also applies to justices of the Louisiana Supreme Court and judges of limited jurisdiction courts. When recusing oneself, the rule now requires justices, judges of courts of appeal, and judges of district, family, juvenile, parish, city, traffic, and municipal courts, to contemporaneously file into the record of the proceeding an order of recusal and written reasons for recusal and provide copies of the same to the judicial administrator of the Louisiana Supreme Court.

Clarification Regarding Emeritus Status:

By Order dated September 22, 2023, the Court amended LASC Rule XVIII, Section 3(B) to clarify that lawyers on emeritus status who engage in the pro bono practice of law through a program established, sponsored, or recognized by the LSBA's Access to Justice Program must do so "without compensation." It was previously somewhat ambiguous as to whether an emeritus attorney's provision of legal services through such programs at a substantially reduced fee could be permissible under the rule.

Amendment to Rule 1.10 of the Rules of Professional Conduct (Imputation of Conflicts of Interest):

Following recommended amendments from the LSBA House of Delegates, the Supreme Court amended Rule of Professional Conduct 1.10, which addresses the imputation of conflicts of interests, effective May 10, 2023. The rule generally provides that while lawyers are associated in a firm, "none of them shall knowingly represent a client when any one of them practicing alone would be prohibited from doing so by Rules 1.7 or 1.9."

The new rule contains a new subsection (g), which does not impute to the entire firm a conflict of a *non-lawyer*, such as a paralegal or secretary, or a lawyer whose conflict arose because of events that occurred before the person became a lawyer but instead requires that the individual be screened from any personal participation in the matter. The new rule also contains new subsections (c) and (d), which do not impute to the entire firm a conflict of a lateral hire personally disqualified from representing a person with interests adverse to a client of the lateral's former firm, if the lateral hire is screened from personal participation in the matter (and other requirements are met). The new subsections are intended to balance the interests of the client of the former firm with the interests in mobility of attorneys and clients to their counsel of choice. Subsection (c) sets forth the measures that must be taken to protect the confidentiality interests of the lateral's former client. Subsection (d) makes clear that this procedure to avoid imputed disqualification of the firm is not available if the lateral's previous representation involved an adjudicative proceeding directly adverse to the interest of the firm's current client and was pending at the time the lawyer changed firms.

Amendment of Rule XXX (Rules for Continuing Legal Education):

By Order dated June 26, 2023, the Court amended Louisiana Supreme Court Rule XXX by adding Regulation 3.22 to allow participation in the Louisiana State Bar Association's Transition Into Practice Program to satisfy the CLE requirements for the first two full calendar years following an attorney's admission to the Bar. The Court took action to encourage newly admitted attorneys to take full advantage of the program's offerings.

PART II: RECENT LAWYER DISCIPLINE CASES

Opinions are available on the day they are released on the Louisiana Supreme Court website.

RULE 1: CLIENT-LAWYER RELATIONSHIP

1.1, Competence

1.3, Diligence

1.4, Communication

1.5, Fees

1.7 and 1.8, Conflict of Interest: Current Clients

1.15, Safekeeping Property

1.16, Obligations Following Termination of Representation

In re: Steel, 24-1471 (La. 6/3/25), 410 So. 3d 755:

The case consists of multiple formal charges dating back to occurrences in 2016. Among other serious issues, respondent neglected legal matters, failed to communicate with clients, failed to refund unearned fees, failed to obtain consent to settle, converted client funds, entered into a prohibited business transaction with a client by borrowing thousands of dollars and ignoring requests to refund the loan (including ignoring a lawsuit brought against him), knowingly made a false statement of material fact in connection with a disciplinary investigation, and failed to cooperate with the ODC. The hearing committee recommended disbarment and the disciplinary board recommended permanent disbarment. (Rules 1.3, 1.4(a)(3), 1.5(f)(5), 1.8(k), 1.15(d), 1.18(a), 8.1(a), 8.4(a), and 8.4(c))

- **Action: The Court imposed permanent disbarment.** The Court considered "whether the gravity of respondent's misconduct warrants" permanent or regular disbarment. LASC Rule XIX, § 10(A)(1) provides that "the court shall only impose permanent disbarment upon an express finding of the presence of the following factors: (1) the lawyer's misconduct is so egregious as to demonstrate a convincing lack of ethical and moral fitness to practice law; and (2) there is no reasonable expectation of significant rehabilitation in the lawyer's character in the future." The Court found both factors satisfied here: "A review of the voluminous record of these proceedings plainly demonstrates the first factor is satisfied. Respondent victimized multiple clients and third parties, causing actual harm by converting at least \$45,000 in funds which did not belong to him. He acted with deceit and dishonestly, repeatedly failing to respond to requests for information from his clients. We have recognized such conduct warrants permanent disbarment. . . . The record further establishes there is no reasonable expectation that respondent's character may be rehabilitated in the future. Respondent's disciplinary history dates back over twenty years to his first admonition in 2004."
- **Griffin, J.,** dissents and would impose regular disbarment.

In re: Leavoy, 24-1444 (La. 6/3/25), 410 So. 3d 769:

Respondent's brother was hired to handle a personal injury claim on a contingency fee basis, but the client never signed a written contingency fee agreement. The brother subsequently associated respondent as co-counsel in the matter. Respondent did not work at the same firm as his brother. The client did not agree in writing to respondent's representation, nor was he advised in writing as to the share of the attorney's fees that respondent and his brother would each receive. Respondent met with the client's healthcare providers, took a deposition, and participated in an unsuccessful mediation in 2020, but he failed to file a motion to set the case for trial. Respondent suffered a heart attack in June 2022 and underwent surgery the following year, and the defendants filed a motion to dismiss the case as abandoned, which was granted. Respondent failed to answer the formal charges. (Rules 1.3, 1.4, 1.5(c), 1.5(e))

- **Action:** The Court imposed a 12 month suspension with all but six months deferred.

In re: Williams, 25-0200 (La. 4/23/25), 406 So. 3d 1151:

Respondent neglected a matter, failed to communicate with a client, failed to safeguard and remit client funds amounting to over \$9000 resulting in conversion, and engaged in dishonest conduct. (Rules 1.3, 1.4, 1.15(a), 1.15(d), 8.1(c), 8.4(c))

- **Action: The Court imposed a suspension of one year and one day.** Of note, the Court rejected the hearing committee finding of a Rule 8.1(c) violation. The Court stated: "The record reveals that respondent appeared for the sworn statement, provided the ODC with multiple, written responses, and returned the money owed to Mr. Banks. While there is some evidence in the record that respondent initially failed to timely respond to the ODC, it does not rise to the level of clear and convincing proof of a violation of Rule 8.1(c)." The Court also noted the mitigating factor of a delay in disciplinary proceedings.
- **Griffin, J., dissented,** and would impose a lesser sanction.

In re: Burns, 24-1119 (La. 11/27/24), 396 So. 3d 441:

Respondent was admitted to practice in 1998, and had a disciplinary history, including a one year suspension in 2018. He was reinstated in 2019. This matter involves two charges. In the first, respondent was retained in a criminal case before his 2018 suspension. While the representation was going, he failed to notify the client of his suspension and failed to return his client file or timely refund the unearned portion of his fee. Instead, he accepted 24 separate payments from the parents of the client. He also failed to withdraw from the representation and, instead, "appointed" another attorney to handle the criminal case without the client's knowledge or prior consent. The client was ultimately sentenced to serve 40 years in prison. In the second charge, respondent was terminated by the client and failed to return the fee. (Rules 1.4, 1.5(f)(5), 1.16(d), 3.4(c), 5.5(e)(4), 8.1(a), 8.4(c)).

- **Action: The Court imposed a two year suspension,** noting that a petition for reinstatement is required. The Court noted the aggravating factors of a prior disciplinary record, a dishonest or selfish motive, multiple offenses, vulnerability of the victim, and

substantial experience in the practice of law, though the Court did note he made full and free disclosure to the board and participated in the proceedings.

In re: Sonnier, 24-0520 (La. 10/25/24), 395 So. 3d 850:

This matter involves ten separate counts, including intentionally dishonest conduct. When respondent left his clients and legal practice, he took unearned fees and insurance payments due to his clients, then failed to disburse those payments. He failed to maintain communication and act diligently toward his clients, causing a delay in the legal matters of his clients and potentially caused the loss of their rights or defenses. The hearing committee recommended respondent be suspended from the practice of law for one year and one day, with no credit for the time served under interim suspension. On the other hand, the disciplinary board recommended respondent be disbarred, retroactive to the date of his interim suspension. The board made certain factual findings important to the proceedings in the LASC, including: (i) declining to find a violation of Rule 8.1(c) in one of the counts, finding it was not clear whether respondent personally received notice of the complaints against him; and (ii) finding no misconduct in one count relating to an unpaid court reporter bill. The ODC objected to the board's findings of fact and conclusions of law, but not to the proposed sanction of disbarment. (Rule 1.3, 1.4, 1.5(f), 1.16(d), 8.4(a), 8.4(c), 8.4(d))

- **Action: The Court imposed disbarment.** The Court disagreed with one of the disciplinary board's factual findings, noting that Rule 8.1(c) does not include a "knowing" component and can be found to have been negligently violated. The Court agreed with the disciplinary board's finding that there was no misconduct related to the failure to pay the court reporter.

In re: Hjortsberg, 24-0149 (La. 6/28/24), 388 So. 3d 382:

This matter involves two counts. Count I related to respondent's self-report that he would plead guilty to a federal misdemeanor related to a tax violation. Count II relates to respondent's representation of a client in a first degree murder trial. During the trial, the client left the courthouse and did not return. Respondent moved for a continuance and a mistrial, but the trial court denied the motions. Respondent then advised the court that he would not participate in the trial and would simply sit at the counsel table, taking no role in the defense. The hearing committee found ODC did not carry its burden of proof as to Count II. The disciplinary board did find a violation but due to the unique circumstances it did not recommend any suspension above and beyond that imposed for Count I. (Rules 1.3, 8.4(a), 8.4(d))

- **Action: The Court imposed a suspension of six months, with all but 30 days deferred.** The Court did find a violation on Count II, but imposed no additional period of suspension for this violation, noting the "unique circumstances of this case."
- **Crichton, J., additionally concurred:** Because of the *res nova* nature of the issue, he agreed there should be no additional suspension imposed: "This rare situation occurred without warning and presents to the Court as a *res nova* issue in the professional responsibility context. Though respondent's initial confusion over the situation was understandable, a lawyer in this situation cannot opt to be the proverbial potted plant. The effect of respondent's decision was that, by absconding the courthouse during trial, his

client was permitted a retrial due to respondent's choice to sit entirely mute---a result the justice system cannot condone."

- **Crain, J., dissents in part:** He would not find a Rule 1.3 violation, noting that respondent "had no one to assist because the defendant absconded. Through this act, the respondent's ethical obligation to the defendant also disappeared. Further, a defendant must be competent to assist in his defense, or it is a violation of his rights to proceed. La. Code Crim. Proc. art. 641. Here, there was no competent defendant to assist counsel. Under these facts, counsel was not obligated to do anything."

In re: Fields, 23-0343 (La. 11/17/23), 374 So. 3d 95:

The matter involves multiple counts, including failure supervise non-lawyer staff, resulting in the conversion of approximately \$4.2 million belonging to third parties; intentionally continuing to convert third-party funds totaling approximately \$1.8 million to pay older third-party debts; failing to maintain a trust account for several years; lying on trust account disclosure statements that he did not handle client funds; allowing non-lawyers to sign trust account checks; charging clients for inappropriate office expenses; settling a client's personal injury claim without the client's knowledge or consent; and lying to the ODC during its investigation. The hearing committee recommended disbarment and the disciplinary board recommended permanent disbarment. (Rules 1.1(c), 1.2, 1.8(e)(3), 1.8(k), 1.15(a), 1.15(d), 1.15(f), 1.15(g), 5.3, 8.1(b), 8.1(c), 8.4(a), 8.4(d))

- **Action: Court imposed a three year suspension.** Despite the presence of numerous aggravating factors, the Court downwardly deviated from the baseline sanction. The Court noted the mitigating factors present, "in particular the significant restitution respondent has already made and continues to make."
- **Weimer, C.J., concurred in part and dissented in part,** and would have imposed disbarment "based on respondent's prolonged and egregious course of misconduct."
- **Crichton, J., concurred in part and dissented in part,** and would have imposed disbarment.

RULE 2: COUNSELOR

2.1, Advisor

In re: Pierson, 22-B-1439 (La. 5/5/23), 362 So. 3d 371:

The underlying facts here are complex and involve three separate instances of respondent entering into business transactions with clients. (1) Respondent persuaded his client to provide a \$500,000 loan to an LLC of which he was part owner, without fully disclosing the terms of the transaction and without advising her to seek the advice of independent counsel. Respondent benefited from the loan and was partly responsible for the LLC's default, to his client's detriment. The client is owed \$790,255. (2) Respondent obtained a personal loan from a client in the amount of \$5,000. He failed to pay interest, took years to repay the loan, did not reduce it to writing, and did not inform the client to seek the advice of independent counsel before agreeing to the loan. (3) Respondent obtained a personal loan from a client for over \$27,000. The loan was reduced to writing and the client obtained a lien on the vehicle to secure the loan, but at the time of the loan,

respondent represented the client and never advised him to seek the advice of independent counsel before providing the loan. (Rules 1.8(a), 2.1, 8.4(a), 8.4(c))

- **Action: The Court imposed disbarment** and ordered restitution. The Court particularly noted the "numerous aggravating factors" and absence of mitigating factors.

RULE 3: ADVOCATE

3.1, Meritorious Claims and Contentions

3.2, Expediting Litigation

3.3, Candor to the Tribunal

3.4, Fairness to Opposing Party and Counsel

3.5, Impartiality and Decorum of the Tribunal

3.6, Trial Publicity

3.8, Special Responsibilities of a Prosecutor

In re: Klein, 23-0066 (La. 5/18/23), 362 So. 3d 392:

Respondent has an extensive disciplinary history attorney dating back to 1975, including a three-month suspension in 1987. The instant charges relate to filing duplicative and unnecessary pleadings in state and federal court in order to delay a case. Before a hearing on his matter occurred in the district court, respondent filed two writ applications in the LASC seeking "protection" from possible Orders of Contempt (which were forwarded to ODC, who, in turn, opened an investigation). Respondent also sought to recuse the district judge from a matter, accusing him of being partial towards the opposing law firm (Kean Miller) and stating that his integrity had been compromised. During its investigation of this matter, ODC discovered that respondent threatened the managing partner of Kean Miller with a legal malpractice claim and demanded a settlement of \$3 million. Respondent also asserted in pleadings that Kean Miller was complicit in aiding and abetting criminal activity on the part of its client and began sending harassing and threatening messages to other non-attorney employees of the firm. After being charged with the violations, respondent answered the formal charges and denied misconduct. He did not appear at the hearing, which proceeded in his absence. (Rules 3.1, 3.3(1), 3.4(c), 3.5(a), 3.5(b), 3.5(d), 4.4(a), 8.2(a), 8.4(a), 8.4(c), 8.4(d).)

- **Action: The Court imposed a suspension of one year and one day.** The Court noted, in part: "Respondent's actions in the instant case clearly crossed the boundary between zealous advocacy and professional misconduct. . . . He filed multiple pleadings into the record without leave of court, in clear violation of the trial court's order. He improperly entered into ex parte communications with the trial court's law clerk, which the committee found represented an 'inappropriate and disruptive attempt to influence the court.' Finally, he has repeatedly made unfounded accusations of improper conduct against opposing counsel and the trial court.

Significantly, respondent's harassing conduct did not abate after the filing of formal charges but has continued during the course of these disciplinary proceedings. Respondent's filings in this disciplinary matter are replete with unsubstantiated attacks on the integrity of the ODC, the trial

judge, and opposing counsel. . . . Such unsupported attacks clearly exceed the bounds of mere advocacy.

Respondent has also burdened this court during these disciplinary proceedings by filing multiple motions and pleadings, the vast majority of which have no bearing on the issues presented in his disciplinary case. . . . Taken as a whole, respondent's actions, both in the context of the underlying litigation and the disciplinary proceedings, display a disturbing lack of respect for the judicial system and his obligations as a professional.

As aptly stated by Justice Crichton, "[i]t is unfortunate that respondent does not seem to understand that being a zealous advocate does not equate to such repugnant disrespect for the system we are charged to honor and serve." *In re: McCool*, 15-0284 (La. 6/30/15), 172 So. 3d 1058, 1090 (Crichton, J. concurring). It is beyond question that the formal charges have been proven by clear and convincing evidence."

- **Crichton, J., dissented as to the sanction only, which he found "unduly lenient."**

***In re: Perricone*, 18-B-1233 (La. 12/5/18), 263 So. 3d 309:**

Respondent, an Assistant United States Attorney, posted over 2600 comments on nola.com, including 100-200 comments on cases he and/or his colleagues were prosecuting. The ODC alleged the comments constituted extrajudicial statements about the guilt or innocence of defendants and/or others under investigation or prosecution that had a substantial likelihood of materially prejudicing proceedings and heightening public condemnation of the accused. Respondent admitted the factual allegations, and offered testimony from a psychologist that he suffered from PTSD and his postings were the result of his PTSD. He testified that he thought his online activities would help him deal with the stress of his work as an AUSA. (Rules 1.7(a)(2), 3.6, 3.8(f), 8.4(d), 8.4(a))

- **Action:** The Court imposed disbarment. The Court found respondent knew his postings were forbidden, and caused serious, actual harm in two cases, and "profound" harm to the reputation of the USAO. The Court noted that "any mental disability from which respondent suffered did not prevent him from knowing his actions were wrong," and found "no support for the conclusion that respondent has proven his mental condition caused the misconduct." The Court stated: "[C]onsidering respondent's position of public trust as a prosecutor, his knowing and intentional decision to post these comments despite his acknowledgment that it was improper to do so, and the serious harm respondent's conduct has caused both to individual litigants and to the legal profession as a whole, we must conclude he has failed to comply with the high ethical standards we require of lawyers who are granted the privilege to practice law in this state. The only appropriate sanction under these facts is disbarment."
- Crichton, J., additionally concurred, noting the case "highlights the difference between disbarment and permanent disbarment in attorney disciplinary proceedings." Had respondent agreed to interim suspension and received disbarment upon conclusion of disciplinary proceedings, he would be entitled to file a petition for reinstatement sooner. "In other words, the sanction of disbarment imposed at this point in respondent's

profession, at the age of 67, is arguably akin to permanent disbarment and essentially a legal profession death sentence. Whether respondent would ever be readmitted -- even conditionally readmitted -- is a question for another day, but the sanction of disbarment now precludes any consideration of it for five years from the date of this opinion."

RULE 5: LAW FIRMS AND ASSOCIATIONS

Rule 5.1, Responsibilities of Partners, Managers, and Supervisory Lawyers

Rule 5.3, Responsibilities Regarding Nonlawyer Assistance

Rule 5.5(a), Engaging in the Unauthorized Practice of Law

Rule 5.5(b), Assisting a person in the unauthorized practice of law

In re: Johnson, 24-1159 (La. 12/11/24), 396 So. 3d 953:

Respondent was admitted to the bar in 1979 and had a disciplinary history dating back to 1985. She was disbarred in 2020. In September 2023, the ODC received a complaint from a prosecutor at the Jefferson Parish DA's Office, Economic Crime Unit, which had been conducting an investigation into an individual for contractor fraud. During the investigation, respondent contacted the Kenner Police and identified herself as a "retired attorney." She advised the police that she would not represent the contractor but would try to help to resolve the matter. She did not disclose her disbarment. She later represented the contractor as her "client" to the victims' attorney and engaged in settlement discussions on the contractor's behalf. (Rules 1.16(a)(1), 5.5(a), 8.1(c), 8.4(a)-(d))

- **Action: Court permanently disbarred respondent.** The Court found this case met the standards for permanent disbarment in Supreme Court Rule XIX. Respondent's disregard of the already-existing disbarment order "demonstrates a convincing lack of ethical and moral fitness to practice law. Respondent has demonstrated multiple times that, given the chance, he will continue to engage in the unauthorized practice of law in defiance of our orders." Further, "given respondent's defiance of previous court orders and his complete lack of cooperation in this proceeding, there is no reasonable expectation of significant rehabilitation in his character in the future."
- **Crichton, J.,** additionally concurred: "Because respondent appears to have been undeterred by the order of disbarment, the district attorney might deem the facts of this matter to be worthy of further investigation."

In re: Walsh, 24-0026 (La. 3/5/24), 379 So. 3d 1251:

Respondent had a disciplinary history dating back to 2018. He had not yet sought reinstatement from his 2018 suspension when he engaged in the unauthorized practice of law, failed to advise his client of his suspension, and fraudulently filed pleadings under his father's name and bar roll number to conceal his unauthorized practice of law. He was disbarred for this in 2021; he was later adjudged guilty of additional rule violations for first offense DWI. In the instant case, respondent informed an investigator from the East Baton Rouge Parish Coroner's Office that he was an attorney representing a client attempting to obtain reports related to her daughter's death. The investigator discovered respondent was disbarred and filed a disciplinary complaint. The client

later confirmed she had hired respondent and paid him \$500. (Rules 1.16(a)(1), 5.5(a), 8.1(b), 8.1(c), 8.4(b), 8.4(c))

- **Action: Court permanently disbarred respondent.** The Court found this case met the standards for permanent disbarment in Supreme Court Rule XIX. Respondent's disregard of the already-existing disbarment order "demonstrates a convincing lack of ethical and moral fitness to practice law. Respondent has demonstrated multiple times that, given the chance, he will continue to engage in the unauthorized practice of law in defiance of our orders." Further, "given respondent's defiance of previous court orders and his complete lack of cooperation in this proceeding, there is no reasonable expectation of significant rehabilitation in the future."
- **Crain, J., concurred:** "I doubt that permanent disbarment will stop someone who was unfazed by his disbarment. The unauthorized practice of law is a crime. La. R.S. 37:213."

RULE 7: INFORMATION ABOUT LEGAL SERVICES

7.2, Communications Concerning a Lawyer's Services

7.7, Evaluation of Advertisements

7.10, Firm Names

In re: Hall, 23-0935 (La. 12/5/23), 373 So. 3d 692:

This case relates to two separate charges. In the first, respondent engaged with a web development company for an advertising campaign with his law firm. He authorized his law firm staff to send a letter engaging the media firm under his signature. Later, respondent refused to pay for additional services and terminated the relationship. After the law firm was sued for this failure to pay, respondent made false statements in legal proceedings, stating that he and his law firm were "completely unaware of the existence of" the web development company. During ODC's investigation, respondent testified that contrary to his representation in the legal filing, he was aware of the existence of the company.

In the second count, respondent violated advertising rules by not submitting an advertisement for LSBA review, failing to disclose his office location and omitting required disclaimers in the advertisement. (Rules 3.3(a)(1), 3.3(a)(3), 7.2(a)(2), 7.2(c)(1)(i), 7.7(c), 8.4(c), 8.4(d))

- **Action: The Court imposed a suspension of four months, fully deferred.** Though there were several aggravating factors (prior disciplinary record, dishonest or selfish motive, multiple offenses, and substantial experience in the practice of law), the Court also recognized certain mitigating factors, including good faith effort to rectify the consequences of the misconduct, good character and reputation, and remorse.

In re: Eugene P. Redmann, 21-0955 (La. 10/5/21), 325 So. 3d 366; In re: John W. Redmann, 21-1060 (La. 10/5/21), 325 So. 3d 364:

In these cases, both respondents advertised on billboards without presenting the advertisements to the LSBA prior to or concurrently with dissemination of the advertisements. The content of the

ads was not false, misleading, or deceptive, but it failed to include one or more bona fide office locations of the lawyer to perform the advertised services in accordance with Rule 7.2(a)(2). (Rules 7.2, 7.7.) Both cases involved petitions for consent discipline; in both cases, the parties agree that respondents acted negligently, causing no actual harm but creating the potential for harm.

- **The Court imposed a public reprimand on both respondents**, noting that each previously received private discipline for failure to comply with the advertising rules (private admonishments in 2013).
- **McCallum, J., concurred in both cases**, and noted that no actual harm was caused and the infractions are minor, but reflect the Court's "continuing efforts to address widespread abuses in lawyer advertising."

RULE 8: MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF THE PROFESSION

Rule 8.4(b), Misconduct (Criminal Act)

In re: Neal, 23-0344 (La. 11/17/23) 374 So. 3d 125:

Respondent was arrested for battery of his son's employer. After the employer notified respondent that his son was late for work and asked for his phone number, respondent replied with an abusive and racially improper text message. He then showed up at the restaurant in a rage, grabbed the victim's ankles, and pulled him the length of and off the preparation counter, causing the victim to fall on his back and head to the concrete floor. From there, respondent dragged the victim into the kitchen and knelt on his upper chest and neck. Respondent then grabbed the victim's head, which he repeatedly pounded into the floor, and was heard to say, "I will kill you." The attack ended when a female employee, in an effort to pull the victim free from respondent, reached out and grabbed the victim as he lay on the kitchen floor. Other employees who witnessed the attack called 911 and summoned police. Respondent disengaged and left the premises. During the disciplinary investigation, the ODC obtained text messages sent by respondent to the victim on the day after the event. In the messages, respondent asked the victim to provide false information to police and suggest to police that the attack was all a big misunderstanding. (Rules 8.4(a), 8.4(b))

- **Action: Court imposed a suspension of one year and one day, with six months deferred and two years probation.**
- **Weimer, C.J., concurred in part and dissented in part.** He found the respondent's "lack of candor" related to the text message sent to the victim to merit a lengthier period of actual suspension.
- **Crain, J., dissented**, finding the suspension imposed too lenient.

In re: Soileau, 22-1764 (La. 3/7/23), 356 So. 3d 1012:

Respondent's disciplinary history dates back to 1985 as an attorney. He was disciplined and suspended for six months without pay in 1987, while serving as a judge. In 1997 he pleaded guilty to federal crimes and was suspended from the practice of law for two years. In 2013, he was

admonished for further violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct. This case consists of two counts. In the first, respondent was booked with third offense DWI after a traffic accident. In the second, respondent was arrested on charges of letting premises for prostitution, obstruction of justice, and prostitution. He was apparently financing illegal activities of a known crystal methamphetamine dealer, encouraging her to "get rid of whatever you have" when he knew police were nearby, thereby counseling a client engaged in criminal conduct. Respondent failed to answer the charges or otherwise cooperate in the investigation. (Rules 1.2(d), 8.4(a), 8.4(b), 8.4(c))

- **Action: The Court imposed permanent disbarment**, stating in part: "Respondent's misconduct was undoubtedly egregious. By interfering with a police investigation and counseling a client to destroy evidence, respondent has demonstrated a convincing lack of ethical and moral fitness to practice law. Furthermore, respondent's long prior disciplinary history, both as an attorney and a judge, demonstrates that there is no reasonable expectation of significant rehabilitation in his character in the future."
- **Hughes, J., dissents, and would impose regular disbarment.**

Rule 8.4(b) -- Special Section on DWIs

In re: Baer, 09-B-1795 (La. 11/20/09), 21 So. 3d 941

This Court noted in a case involving multiple DWI charges: "Respondent caused tangible harm in the form of property damage; however, the committee felt the more serious harm results when members of the legal profession engage in criminal acts, which give rise to a ***lack of confidence by members of the public in those who are officers of the court.***" (Emphasis added.) The Court further explained:

We have imposed sanctions ranging from actual periods of suspension to fully deferred suspensions in prior cases involving attorneys who drive while under the influence of alcohol. However, as a general rule, we tend to impose an actual suspension in those instances in which multiple DWI offenses are at issue, as well as in cases in which the DWI stems from a substance abuse problem that appears to remain unresolved.

In re: Wilson, 2020-1488 (La. 5/13/21), 320 So. 3d 1064:

Respondent was arrested on charges of DWI, driving left of center, and having an expired registration certificate. She enrolled in a pre-trial diversion program to resolve the criminal charges. She self-reported to the ODC and was referred to JLAP. Upon being recommended for long-term inpatient treatment, respondent declined to do so on the basis that she contended it would cause her financial difficulty and she does not have a substance abuse issue. (8.4(b).)

- **Action: Court imposed a suspension of one year and one day**, with all but 90 days deferred, subject to the condition that before being reinstated, respondent shall produce evidence that she is in compliance with all treatment recommendations of JLAP and has entered into an appropriate monitoring contract.
- **Weimer, C.J., concurred**, noting that while *Baer* forms a "useful starting point for analysis of the appropriate discipline in cases arising from substance abuse issues, we do

not and should not apply it in a purely mechanical fashion. Rather, each case must be evaluated to determine the unique facts and circumstances bearing on the attorney's condition. An important component of this analysis is the willingness or unwillingness of the attorney to submit to appropriate evaluation by the professionals at JLAP and to avail himself or herself of suitable treatment as recommended by these professionals. While the primary aim of the court is not to punish attorneys for their substance abuse problems, the overarching duty of this court to protect the public may justify imposition of different types of sanctions depending on the attorney's level of cooperation in addressing any substance abuse issues."

DWI -- First Offense

In re: Bensabat, 23-0620 (La. 12/8/23), 381 So. 3d 36:

Respondent was arrested on charges of DWI and pleaded guilty to first offense DWI. He self-reported to the ODC. The majority imposed a suspension of three years, deferred in its entirety.

Chief Justice Weimer and Justice Crichton dissented. Justice Weimer wrote that "the discipline imposed by the opinion problematic and ineffective," noting that it departed from the standard set forth in *In re: Baer*. He explained: "Since 2009, this court has continued to adhere to the *Baer* standards, imposing an actual period of suspension in cases in which attorneys with substance use disorders are not participating in JLAP or otherwise able to prove their substance abuse problems have been resolved. . . . Although respondent only had one conviction for DWI, the record indicates he has a significant unresolved substance abuse issue. . . . In his testimony before the committee, respondent explained that he has been drinking alcohol on a regular basis since the age of fifteen. He acknowledged that alcohol played a part in the failure of his marriage. Nevertheless, he admitted that he continues to consume alcohol 'just about every day.' . . . The majority opinion's complete deferral of the suspension is unjustified in this case, where respondent has not fully cooperated with JLAP, and has otherwise refused to obtain treatment and delayed this matter by being evaluated and re-evaluated, while appearing at the re-evaluation under the influence. The sanction imposed does nothing to help respondent, does nothing to protect respondent's clients, and fails to adequately protect the public. There is no question respondent's untreated alcoholism impairs his practice, regardless of respondent's naive belief otherwise."

On rehearing, Justice Crichton noted he would grant the application and order that respondent be suspended for one year and one day in adherence with *Baer*.

In re: Fontenot, 23-0759 (La. 9/19/23), 370 So. 3d 450:

Court imposed suspension for one year and one day for one DWI arrest and noted respondent failed to answer the formal charges. The Court stated: "Respondent committed a single DWI offense. However, due to his lack of cooperation with the disciplinary investigation, we do not know whether he suffers from a substance abuse problem. An actual suspension is therefore warranted."

In re: Crawford, 20-0691 (La. 7/2/20), 297 So. 3d 732:

Court imposed suspension for one year and one day for one DWI arrest and no compliance with JLAP recommendation.

DWI -- Multiple Offenses

In re: Meche, 2024-0262 (La. 6/28/24), 388 So. 3d 325:

Court imposed two year suspension for third offense DWI. The Court noted that this will require respondent to "file a formal application for reinstatement if he wishes to return to the practice of law."

In re: Groome, 20-0737 (La. 9/29/20), 301 So. 3d 1166:

Court imposed suspension of one year and one day, fully deferred, subject to conditions relating to recommendations made by JLAP, for two DWI arrests.

In re: Radziewicz, 20-0641 (La. 8/5/20), 300 So. 3d 840:

Court imposed suspension for one year and one day, fully deferred, subject to a period of probation coinciding with a two-year JLAP agreement, for two DWI arrests.

In re: Bopp, 20-0070 (La. 2/26/20), 290 So. 3d 172:

Court imposed suspension of one year and one day, with all but ninety days deferred, followed by a period of probation coinciding with a five-year JLAP agreement, for two DWI arrests.

In re: Chadwick, 18-0691 (La. 6/15/18), 245 So. 3d 1041:

Court imposed suspension of one year and one day, with all but six months deferred, followed by two years of unsupervised probation, for two DWI arrests; No JLAP agreement required.

Rule 8.4(c), Conduct Involving Dishonesty, Fraud, Deceit or Misrepresentation; Rule 8.4(d), Conduct Prejudicial to the Administration of Justice

In re: Andrus, 21-1508 (La. 1/19/22), 348 So. 3d 706:

Respondent was retained to represent a client related to an insurance claim for property damage. He accepted insurance checks for his client and distributed funds to pay for home repairs, but the balance of the client trust account was regularly below the amount he was purportedly holding on the client's behalf. He failed to respond to the client's request for the return of his files. In response to the disciplinary complaint, respondent asserted his truck was burglarized, and his laptop containing his response to the ODC complaint was stolen. He provided to ODC a copy of a handwritten statement to the police in support of this claim, but the police department was unable to verify receiving the complaint and further noted irregularities in it, including the absence of a

complaint number. Finally, when ODC attempted to serve its subpoena upon him, respondent pretended to be his twin brother. (Rules 1.5, 1.15, 8.1(a), 8.1(b), 8.1(c), 8.4(d))

- **Action: Court imposed disbarment.** The Court noted the "numerous instances of deceptive behavior." The Court further stated: "From the incredible tale of a vehicle burglary offered as justification for failing to timely respond to the disciplinary complaint, to his attempt to evade service of a subpoena by claiming to be his identical twin brother, and finally to submitting fabricated receipts and invoices to the ODC, respondent has violated the most fundamental duty of an officer of the court. The utter absence of candor respondent has demonstrated in these proceedings calls his good moral character into serious question and warrants disbarment."
- **Crichton, J.**, additionally concurred, noting respondent's "astonishing level of deception and conversion of client funds." He wrote separately to "again highlight the potential availability of other legal remedies outside the disciplinary process."

In re: Nalls, 20-B-1126 (La. 3/24/21), 347 So. 3d 675:

Respondent had a lengthy disciplinary history and has not been authorized to practice law in Louisiana since January 2009. In this matter, which involves two charges, respondent represented two clients, but never advised either client that he was disbarred and unable to practice law. (Rules 5.5(a), 8.4(a), 8.4(c).)

- **Action: Court imposed disbarment**, and extended the minimum period for readmission for an additional five years. The Court noted that respondent held himself out to be a lawyer after his disbarment and engaged in the unauthorized practice of law. "This conduct, combined with that involved in his prior disciplinary matters, indicates that respondent lacks the moral fitness to practice law and is a threat to his clients, the legal profession, and the public."
- **Weimer, C.J., dissented on the sanction**, and would impose permanent disbarment.
- **Crichton, J. (joined by McCallum, J.), dissented**, and would impose permanent disbarment. He noted respondent's "outrageous actions," specifically filing a motion to recuse the entire Louisiana Supreme Court and accusing seven justices of "racially motivated" bias, which implicated additional rules of professional misconduct.

RECENT JUDICIAL DISCIPLINE CASES

In re: Judge Eboni Johnson Rose, 2025-00390 (La. 4/23/25), 406 So. 3d 1163:

In 2024, the Judiciary Commission received complaints and media reports regarding alleged misconduct by Judge Rose in four separate criminal matters. This consisted of three cases involving serious legal errors regarding relatively straightforward issues of criminal procedure, and one case in which her comments in court indicative of bias against the District Attorney's Office. She used profane and offensive language, including a racial slur, in doing so. After an interim disqualification, Judge Rose and the Commission submitted a joint petition for consent discipline in which Judge Rose admitted that her conduct violated the Code of Judicial Conduct and La. Const. art. V, § 25(C).

- **The Court imposed a six-month suspension, without pay, with all but two months deferred, and a two year period of probation.** The Court did so upon consideration of a joint petition for consent discipline.

In re: Judge Vercell Fiffie, 2024-O-0976 (La. 10/25/2024) 395 So. 3d 738:

The allegations against Judge Fiffie involved myriad violations, including: (1) engaging in a practice of asking or requiring law enforcement to seek consent before issuing a search warrant, which is not required by law and gives an appearance of bias against law enforcement or in favor of criminal suspects; (2) failing to take timely action on pending warrant requests; (3) failing to comply with a fellow judge's request not to recall her bench warrants without first consulting her; (4) violating an appellate court order, which necessitated a second writ application and an order threatening contempt; (5) requesting that his name not be included in the Sheriff's database as the issuing judge on bond orders; and (6) displaying indifference and being uncooperative with other judges and the Sheriff's office after they made attempts to address his conduct or practices.

The Judiciary Commission recommended he be suspended for six months without pay, with three months deferred. The Commission also recommended two-years of probation during which Judge Fiffie must obtain additional judicial education. (Canons 1, 2, 2A, 2B, 3A(1), 3A(4), 3A(7), 3B(1), and La. Const. art. V, § 25)

- **Crichton, J., additionally concurred** noting that the judge's "flagrant conduct in this case ran the gamut of canon violations that demonstrated persistent conduct prejudicial to the administration of justice." He explained that "most troubling" was Judge Fiffie's conduct before the Commission, including that he "did not appear to appreciate the gravity of the allegations against him" and was unable "to recognize the role of a judge within the judicial system or meaningfully acknowledge his errors."
- **McCallum, J., concurred**, stating: "I join the majority in this result only because I was unable to gain a majority to impose a heavier sanction."
- **Weimer, C.J., concurred in part and dissented in part.** He wrote that as to the discipline imposed, he would have agreed with the Commission's recommendation of a lesser sanction than the majority imposed. He stated: "There was no evidence Judge Fiffie wished to harm anyone or that he exploited his position as a judge for personal gain. Based on the record, I would accept the discipline recommended by the Commission, whose members viewed and heard Judge Fiffie's testimony live and in person."
- **Griffin, J., dissented**, stating: "Considering his inexperience as a judge, I would impose a less severe sanction than the majority imposes."

In re: Judge Donald "Chick" Foret, 2025-O-320 (La. 10/15/25)

The Judiciary Commission received complaints regarding Judge Foret's inappropriate judicial demeanor and failing to self-recuse. The hearing officer found that Judge Foret:

- (1) Displayed an inappropriate temperament and demeanor, failed to maintain order and decorum, manifested or created an appearance of bias, failed to be patient and courteous to

others, including the family of a victim, and failed to recuse himself after creating a substantial and objective basis to reasonably question his ability to be impartial; and

- (2) By engaging in such conduct, violated Canons 1, 2, 2A, 3A(1), 3A(2), 3A(3), 3A(4) and 3C of the Code of Judicial Conduct, as well as Article V, Section 25(C) of the Louisiana Constitution (1974).

However, upon review the Louisiana Supreme Court found that while Judge Foret exhibited intemperate words and actions in connection with the recusal issue, he did refer the matter to an ad hoc judge to address the motion, following La. C.C.P. art. 154. The Court concluded there was no violation of Canon 3C on that issue.

Thus, two complaints involving inappropriate temperament and demeanor remained:

- (1) During a criminal jury trial, when the prosecutor requested a brief recess to get a table to distribute the physical evidence, Judge Foret became angry, loudly voicing his disapproval of not requesting the table in advance, and to his minute clerk, who became visibly upset and immediately left the courtroom. While he then adjourned court for the day, he instructed that closing arguments would commence at 9:00 AM the following day. Notwithstanding the announced start time, he began closing arguments earlier, the result of which was that the family of the victims, who had been sequestered to that point, were not present for the initial number of minutes. Regarding the table incident, Deputy Chief Judge Lee Faulkner called Judge Foret to discuss the subject; Judge Foret raised his voice and used profane language directed at Judge Faulkner, overheard by court staff.
- (2) During a break in another case, the lawyers remained in the courtroom, to discuss jury charges. Judge Foret returned to the courtroom and inquired about the settlement posture of the case. Upon being informed of the respective offers made by each side, Judge Foret advised plaintiff counsel to tell his defense counsel to “go f___ himself if he did not raise his settlement offer”.

Wrote the Supreme Court:

Judge Foret’s display of temper reflected a lack of courtesy and patience and is illustrative of a theme in Judge Foret’s conduct – difficulty balancing the need for efficiency and eliminating disruption with recognizing that the individuals responsible for making a courtroom operate well are human, and therefore fallible. He further used profanity when addressing his minute clerk regarding the request for the table and when discussing the incident with Deputy Chief Judge Faulkner. Judge Foret likewise displayed an inappropriate temperament and demeanor and gave the impression that he was not a neutral arbiter during an informal settlement discussion when he used an expletive to describe how plaintiff’s counsel should respond to defense counsel’s settlement offer.

All of the foregoing incidents constituted a failure to observe a high standard of conduct so as to preserve the integrity and independence of the judiciary; a failure to avoid impropriety in all activities; a failure to maintain order and decorum in judicial proceedings; and a failure to be

patient, dignified, and courteous to litigants, jurors, witnesses, lawyers, and others with whom Judge Foret dealt with in his official capacity, in violation of Canons 1, 2, 2A, 3A(2) and 3A(3).

Judge Foret's decision to start proceedings earlier than the time he previously indicated they would start in the criminal jury case demonstrated his failure to recognize the family's right to be present for closing arguments. He further wrongly blamed the attorneys and the family for the family's failure to be present when closing arguments began based on his erroneous assumption that the attorneys would have "extrapolated" his instruction to counsel to arrive at 8:30 AM as a directive to advise the family to arrive at that time as well. Judge Foret's refusal to accommodate the victim's family by starting court at the time he had announced and after being told that the family members were on their way constituted a failure to be patient, dignified and courteous to litigants, jurors, witnesses, lawyers and others with whom the judge deals in an official capacity in violation of Canons 1 and 3A(3).

Regarding demeanor before the Commission:

The Court noted that the Commission was left with concerns about the extent to which he is able to change his "old-school temperament" and understand what constitutes an appropriate judicial demeanor or the necessity of exhibiting one. For example, when Judge Foret appeared before the Commission he became heated in response to certain questions and appeared as if he was struggling to keep his composure. The fact that this was evident in his appearance before the Commission caused some reservation about his ability to remain patient and dignified with staff and in the courtroom on a daily basis.

Following the guidelines set forth in *In re: Chaisson*, 549 So.2d 259 (La. 1989), the Court unanimously ordered suspension for 30 days without pay and reimbursement for costs incurred by the Commission in the amount of \$7,488.67.

In re: Judge Jennifer M. Medley, 2025-O-879 (La. 10/24/25)

Two counts with which the Commission and the Court found to be violations:

- (1) Judge Medley's campaign created a video advertisement accusing Judge Bruno of being "called a judge by some and a deadbeat dad by others," refusing to pay child support for thirteen years, and refusing to provide his ex-wife with discovery regarding his income. Although Judge Bruno obtained a Temporary Restraining Order to stop Judge Medley from airing the ad, Judge Medley's campaign Facebook page repeated statements from the advertisement. The commission found that Judge Medley's statements in this advertisement were false and/or misleading in violation of Canons 7A(9) and 7B(1), and 7B(3) of the Code of Judicial Conduct and La. Const. art. V, §25(C) of the Louisiana Constitution.
- (2) In connection with the production video in Count I, Judge Medley made two separate payments from her personal bank account via the Zelle application to the plaintiff in *Doe v Lewis*: one for \$700 on September 28, 2020, and another for \$500 on October 28, 2020. Because Judge Medley stated these payments were intended to reimburse travel expense

incurred as a part of production of the campaign video, they were campaign expenditures that were required to have been reported on her campaign finance report pursuant to La. R.S. 18:1483(9) and 18:1495.4-1495.5. Judge Medley failed to list these payments as campaign expenditures and failed to properly record the payments as electronic funds transfers pursuant to La. R.S. 18:1495.2(D)(2). Thus, Judge Medley violated Canon 7B(1) of the Code of Judicial Conduct and La. Const. art. V, §25(C) of the Louisiana Constitution.

The Court agreed with the Commission findings that:

Judge Medley's misconduct appears to have been motivated by a desire to win the election to judicial office and was troubled by Judge Medley's misconduct and its effect upon the integrity and respect for the judiciary, noting that judicial candidates should exercise restraint and rise above indecorous behavior that has become all too common in campaigns for non-judicial office.

Sanction: Suspension for 30 days without pay and an order of reimbursement to the Commission of \$2,747.41.



NEW ORLEANS -- The Law firm of Sternberg, Naccari & White, LLC, is pleased to announce the expansion of its practice and the addition of former Louisiana Supreme Court Justice Scott J. Crichton to the practice area. Crichton practices via his own firm and is associated with Sternberg, Naccari & White, LLC for certain cases, including legal ethics, judicial ethics, discipline, and other professional matters.

Justice Crichton, who spent 24 years on the district bench in Shreveport and 10 years on the Supreme Court, practices law from offices in Shreveport and New Orleans. Learn more about Justice Crichton here at his website: www.scottcrichtonlaw.com. Justice Crichton is also a [mediator with Perry Dampf](#) and works with SNW and other law firms on select projects.

"We're so excited to have Justice Crichton associate with us on these cases," said [Scott Sternberg](#), the firm's co-Managing Partner. "Suzy Montero and I have been working with him on matters

for some time now, and we know he'll be able to help us build this practice and serve professionals in Louisiana and beyond."

[Learn More about SNW's Legal and Judicial Ethics Practice.](#)

While SNW has represented lawyers and judges since its inception, the association with Scott Crichton Law, LLC allows for a wealth of knowledge and resources, from Justice Crichton's decade of experience on the Louisiana Supreme Court, to the firm's own tech-forward philosophy, the team is ready for ethics and professional liability questions.

Scott Sternberg, Suzy Montero, [Brad Tate](#), and [Haley Jupiter](#) will work with Crichton on these matters. The firm will offer flat and hourly fee arrangements on a case-by-case basis. Lawyer and professional compliance and discipline, as well as investigations into judges and other public officials, will be the focus of the practice.

"As a jurist for 34 years, and now again as an advocate, I have always strived to maintain and instill in others a high standard of ethics and professionalism," Crichton said. "I'm excited to work with SNW because they share my passion for excellence in the profession."

The firm's team is highlighted by [Suzy Montero](#), who brings decades of experience, professionalism, and the know-how from her own run for judicial office. Montero and Sternberg have represented and advised judges and lawyers for several years. Sternberg, also a veteran of several judicial campaigns, has ethics and professional responsibility experience with regulation of lawyers, adjusters, contractors, and engineers, as well as other professional fields.

SNW attorney [Haley Jupiter](#), who hails from a family of judges and has significant campaign experience as well, will be focusing her efforts on educating young lawyers on the Rules of Professional Conduct, as well as helping lawyers through a difficult process and time.

Jupiter and Sternberg recently presented on campaign and judicial ethics at the [2025 Jefferson Bar Association CLE](#) by the Sea, and Jupiter and Crichton plan to speak at an upcoming Louisiana State Bar Association Seminar on lawyer discipline.

The firm has significant experience with business and partnership disputes, including between lawyers and other professionals, and a business team to assist attorneys and other professionals with those issues.

From the American Bar Association Standing Committee on Ethics and Professional Responsibility. Issued: 10/15/25:

A lawyer-mediator does not represent any party to a mediation. Lawyer-mediators must explain their role to mediation parties who are not represented or who do not appear to understand the mediator's function and, where necessary, inform all parties of the difference between the role of a mediator and that of a lawyer representing a party. Unless the parties are sophisticated

consumers of mediation services, it is prudent for the lawyer-mediator not only to inform all parties that the lawyer-mediator does not represent them but also to afford them an opportunity to discuss what this means. In addition to the other rules governing the duties of a mediator, the Model Rules require the lawyer-mediator to avoid communications that are dishonest, fraudulent, deceitful, or misrepresentative in violation of Rule 8.4(c).

PRAYER TO ST. THOMAS MORE

St. Thomas More, scholar of the Law, chancellor of charity, jurist of justice, counsellor of the powerful, advocate of the weak, merry martyr, and saint, may the Lord of all law and of all lawyers, help me this day to be a little more like you.

For the greater glory of God and the pursuit of justice, help me to be accurate in analysis, strict in study, correct in conclusion, candid with clients, honest with adversaries, able in argument and steadfast in faith.

Sit with me at my desk and listen with me to my client, read with me in my library, and stand beside me in court, so that today I shall not lose my soul in order to win a point.

Help me to live in such a way that my spouse and my children may find in me what they have a right to seek – humor and humility, cheerfulness and charity, wisdom and wit, counsel and consolation.

Brother lawyer, who proved our profession can be both honorable and compatible with sanctity, pray for me, now engaged in the struggle to understand and live the Law of God.

Lord Chancellor, stand with me when I plead my cause before the infinite Lord of Justice, who will preside at my final trial.
Amen.