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June 24, 2016

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**BY FIRST-CLASS AND CERTIFIED
MAIL NO. 9414726699042060243262**

Harry S. Max, Esquire
Slocumb Law Firm
777 6th Street, NW
Suite 200
Washington, D.C. 20001

In re Harry Stanley Max, Esquire
(D.C. Bar Registration No. 1021553)
Bar Docket Nos. 2014-D407 & D408

Dear Mr. Max:

This office has completed its investigation of the above-referenced matters. We find that your conduct reflected a disregard of certain ethical standards under the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct. We therefore are issuing you this Informal Admonition pursuant to D.C. Bar Rule XI, §§ 3, 6, and 8.

You represented two clients with personal injury claims arising out of a motor vehicle accident in Virginia Beach. Allstate insured the other vehicle's driver, who was at fault.

Allstate offered to settle your clients' claims in September 2014, approximately a month after the accident. Initially, the clients declined the offers, but later accepted them because they were anxious to obtain funds. In early October 2014, you sent the clients releases and settlement memoranda setting forth the settlement amounts and your proposed distributions. You instructed the clients to sign the documents and to have their signatures on the releases notarized. The clients signed the releases and memoranda and sent them back to you, but without having the releases notarized. You later caused a firm employee to notarize the releases, although you knew that the clients had not appeared before the notary and she did not witness them signing the releases.

Your clients complained to our office about your representation, alleging among other things that you had improperly notarized their signatures on the releases sometime after they signed them.

Based on your responses to the clients' complaints and a review of the client files you produced, we do not find sufficient evidence to support your clients' allegations, with the exception of the improper notarizations – which you admit. You stated that the clients, who lived in Virginia Beach, were in dire need of the settlement funds and wanted to receive them as soon as possible. You stated that you had discussed the releases with the clients and they signed them with full knowledge of the consequences of settling their respective cases. To save time, you decided to have someone in your office notarize the releases, rather than sending them back to your clients to re-execute before a notary. You admit that your doing so was wrong and also unnecessary because Allstate did not require you to provide notarized releases.

Disciplinary Counsel finds that your actions in having the releases notarized under the circumstances was dishonest and violated Rule 8.4(c). In deciding to issue you an Informal Admonition, we have considered that you were only a member of the D.C. Bar for a year when you engaged in the misconduct, you were attempting to expedite payment to your clients, and you have taken responsibility for your actions, including by accepting this Informal Admonition. In addition to accepting an Informal Admonition, you have agreed to take a continuing legal education course in ethics.

This letter constitutes an Informal Admonition pursuant to D.C. Bar Rule XI, §§ 3, 6, and 8, and is public when issued. Please refer to the attachment to this letter of Informal Admonition for a statement of its effect and your right to have it vacated and have a formal hearing before a hearing committee.

If you would like to have a formal hearing, you must submit a written request for a hearing to the Office of Disciplinary Counsel, with a copy to the Board on Professional Responsibility, within 14 days of the date of this letter, unless Disciplinary Counsel grants an extension of time. If a hearing is requested, this Informal Admonition will be vacated, and Disciplinary Counsel will institute formal charges pursuant to D.C. Bar Rule XI, § 8(c). The case will then be assigned to a Hearing Committee, and a hearing will be scheduled by the Executive Attorney for the Board on Professional Responsibility pursuant to D.C. Bar Rule XI, § 8(d). Such a hearing could result in a recommendation to dismiss the charges against you or a recommendation for a finding of culpability, in which case the sanction recommended by the Hearing Committee is not limited to an Informal Admonition.

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Sincerely,

Wallace E. Shipp, Jr.
Disciplinary Counsel

Enclosure: Attachment to Letter of Informal Admonition

cc (w/o Encl.): Client-Complainants

WES:JLP:act