

**THE FOLLOWING INFORMAL ADMONITION WAS ISSUED  
BY BAR COUNSEL ON  
April 1, 2002**

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Sharon Styles-Anderson, Esquire  
5714 16<sup>th</sup> Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20011

Re: **Styles-Anderson/Hinds; Docket No. 424-01**

Dear Ms. Styles-Anderson:

This office has completed its investigation of the above-referenced matter. Because your conduct reflected a disregard of certain ethical standards under the District of Columbia Rules of Professional Conduct (the "Rules"), we are issuing you this Informal Admonition pursuant to Rule XI, §§ 3, 6, and 8 of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals' Rules Governing the Bar.

On August 13, 2001, Mr. Hinds wrote the Honorable Judge Alexander Williams, Jr., of the United States District Court for the District of Maryland, and sent a copy of the letter to this office. In the letter, Mr. Hinds wrote that he unsuccessfully attempted to obtain a copy of his appellate brief from you and was not able to communicate with you. Mr. Hinds states that you filed a brief on his behalf without ever discussing appellate issues with him. Mr. Hinds ends his letter requesting information as to the status of his case.

On November 21, 2001, as part of our preliminary investigation of this matter, this office sent you a letter requesting that you send Mr. Hinds his case file and that you advise this office within ten days of the date of the letter of your position concerning this matter. You failed to respond to Bar Counsel.

On December 19, 2001, this office opened this matter for a full investigation and requested your response to Mr. Hinds' allegations within 10 days of the date of the letter. On January 9, 2002, you responded. You state that you mailed all files to Mr. Hinds before Mr. Hinds mailed his complaint to this office. You state that you were retained to represent Mr. Hinds on appeal and that you communicated with him prior to filing a brief in the case. You further state that you sent a copy of the brief to Mr. Hinds, and after receiving a communication from the Court of Appeals, you re-sent the file, including the briefs, and the appellate decision in the case.

On January 11, 2002, we requested that you provide this office your file by January 31, 2002. On January 31, 2002, we received a copy of your file. In a cover letter with the file, you indicate that you were searching for three documents that would corroborate your assertion that you communicated with Mr. Hinds. On February 5, 2002, we requested information as to a petition for re-hearing that you stated in a letter to Mr. Hinds was filed and denied. We also requested that you

forward the documents discussed in your January 31, 2002 letter. We requested a response by February 15, 2002. On February 22, 2002, we received your response. You state that you could not locate a copy of the petition for rehearing *en banc* or the court's order denying the petition, and you deny that you agreed to file such a petition on Mr. Hinds' behalf. You did not forward copies of the three documents previously discussed

On January 14 and 22, 2002, we received further letters from Mr. Hinds detailing his unsuccessful attempts to communicate with you. He states that during the period of the representation, you moved offices and changed your telephone number without informing him. He encloses copies of letters sent to you without a response.

We find that your conduct violates Rule 8.4(c) in that your letter to Mr. Hinds contained a misrepresentation. In your August 15, 2001 letter to Mr. Hinds, you state: "To again, update you on the status of your case, as previously discussed, by phone—with you and your family, a petition for re-hearing *en banc* was filed. The petition for re-hearing was denied, and based on my legal assessment there were no credible legal grounds for petition for the Supreme Court for review." This information was incorrect as no petition for re-hearing was filed or denied. You not only provided inaccurate information as to such a filing, but intentionally gave your client the impression that you had filed such a petition as his attorney. We find that you either knew, or should have known, that this was not true.

We do not find a violation of Rule 1.4(a), although this was a close case. It is clear that during your representation of Mr. Hinds, there was a bare minimum of communication with him. Talking to Mr. Hinds' relatives, in the absence of a specific directive to you from Mr. Hinds to communicate with them instead of him, is not sufficient. In-person communication is not required but written or telephonic communication must be adequate to comply with Rule 1.4(a).

This letter constitutes an Informal Admonition pursuant to Rule XI, §§ 3, 6, and 8 of the Rules of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals Governing the Bar. 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. 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.

This Informal Admonition will become public 14 days from the above date, if you do not request a hearing. If you wish to have a formal hearing, you must submit a request in writing to the Office of Bar Counsel, 515 Fifth Street, NW, Building A, Room 127, Washington, DC 20001, with a copy to the Board on Professional Responsibility, within 14 days of the date of this letter, unless Bar Counsel grants an extension.

Sincerely,

Joyce E. Peters  
Bar Counsel

Enclosure

cc: Anthony Hinds

Sent Certified Mail No. 7106 4575 1294 2774 4638 and Regular Mail