

FILE NO. A04-1536

STATE OF MINNESOTA

IN SUPREME COURT

-----  
In Re Petition for Disciplinary Action  
against STEVEN F. SORONOW,  
a Minnesota Attorney,  
Registration No. 298748.  
-----

**AMENDED AND  
SUPPLEMENTAL PETITION  
FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

TO THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

At the direction of a Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board Panel, and upon the agreement of the parties pursuant to Rule 12(a), Rules on Lawyers Professional Responsibility (RLPR), the Director of the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility, hereinafter Director, files this petition.

The above-named attorney, hereinafter respondent, was admitted to practice law in Minnesota on January 20, 2000. Respondent currently is suspended from the practice of law. Respondent resides in Minnetonka, Minnesota.

Respondent has committed the following unprofessional conduct warranting public discipline:

DISCIPLINARY HISTORY

By Supreme Court order of September 18, 2002, respondent was indefinitely suspended from the practice of law. Respondent's discipline was based upon a pattern of client neglect and non-communication and failure to return client files or unearned retainers in 20 matters; upon his non-cooperation with the disciplinary process; upon

his conviction for a misdemeanor involving dishonesty; and for his failure to pay a law-related judgment. *In re Soronow*, 651 N.W.2d 197 (Minn. 2002).

Since that date, respondent has been issued nine admonitions for additional client neglect and non-communication and failure to return client files or unearned retainers, all involving client conduct that occurred prior to his suspension, and for further non-cooperation since his suspension.

#### FIRST COUNT

1. Respondent was suspended from the practice of law in September 2002 (*see above*). Since that time, he has worked in a non-lawyer capacity for the law practice of his former law partner, S.H.

2. A.Y., an immigration law client of S.H.'s, filed a complaint against S.H. A.Y. is a necessary witness in any proceedings against S.H. Because of the distance involved (A.Y. is a resident of New York City), she was requested to sign an affidavit concerning her complaint for presentation to a Lawyers Board Panel in lieu of live testimony, as authorized by Rule 9(h), RLPR.

3. On October 1, 2003, prior to A.Y. finalizing and signing the affidavit, respondent sent an e-mail to A.Y. asking her to withdraw her complaint against S.H., in part stating, "It is rumored that the BCIS reads the public records of disciplined immigration attorneys. I cannot imagine that you want to jeopardize your H-1B status. You have no obligation to sign the Minnesota Bar affidavit against [S.H]."

4. On October 7, 2003, A.Y. received a second e-mail identified as being from the same e-mail address as the first one, indicating certain consequences for A.Y. should S.H.'s case become public. Despite this second e-mail, A.Y. signed the proposed affidavit.

5. Respondent's conduct violated Rules 3.4(f), and 8.4(d), Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct (MRPC).

#### SECOND COUNT

6. Prior to respondent's suspension from the practice of law, respondent handled all advertising for the law firm in which he was a partner. The firm maintained at least three Internet websites.

7. Even after respondent's suspension, he continued to work as a paralegal for the remaining partner of his former firm, and remained principally responsible for the content of the Internet websites.

8. After respondent's suspension, the firm's websites continued for at least six months to identify respondent as a partner in the firm. One of the websites continued to identify respondent as a partner of the firm for approximately one year after his suspension.

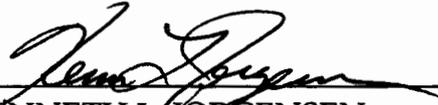
9. Both before and for approximately one year after respondent's suspension, the sites contained several misleading statements such as, "Top 1% of Fiance Visa Law firms by volume 1999-2001," which was misleading in that neither respondent nor his partner were admitted to practice law before 2000 nor could the statement be factually substantiated. The site also contained other misleading statements including "shortest turn around time on the internet," which compared their services to other lawyers but could not be factually substantiated. The sites also contained testimonials from purported clients of the firm but omitted sufficient factual information to know whether the statements were genuine.

10. Respondent's conduct violated Rule 7.1(a) and (c), MRPC.

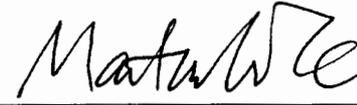
WHEREFORE, the Director respectfully prays for an order of this Court extending respondent's current suspension from the practice of law, awarding costs and

disbursements pursuant to the Rules on Lawyers Professional Responsibility, and for such other, further or different relief as may be just and proper.

Dated: December 28, 2004.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
KENNETH L. JORGENSEN  
DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF LAWYERS  
PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITY  
Attorney No. 159463  
1500 Landmark Towers  
345 St. Peter Street  
St. Paul, MN 55102-1218  
(651) 296-3952

and

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
MARTIN A. COLE  
FIRST ASSISTANT DIRECTOR  
Attorney No. 148416