

**IN THE SUPREME COURT
STATE OF NORTH DAKOTA**

2021 ND 188

In the Matter of Reciprocal Discipline of Michael R. Ruffenach, a Person
Previously Admitted to the Bar of the State of North Dakota

No. 20210240

Recommendation for Reciprocal Discipline.

SUSPENSION ORDERED.

Per Curiam.

[¶1] On August 27, 2021, the North Dakota Disciplinary Board notified the Supreme Court under N.D.R. Lawyer Discipl. 4.4(D) it was recommending the reciprocal discipline of Michael R. Ruffenach. The record reflects that effective February 4, 2021, the Minnesota Supreme Court suspended Ruffenach for 12 months for failing to diligently represent and communicate with a client, failing to safeguard client funds, failing to timely refund fees to a client and failing to take prompt action to resolve a fee dispute, failing to comply with trust account requirements, inappropriately characterizing a fee as a "minimum fee" not subject to refund and earned upon payment, misappropriation of client funds, and failing to timely and fully cooperate with the Director's investigations of his misconduct. The Minnesota Supreme Court conditioned reinstatement on successful completion of the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination and compliance with continuing legal education requirements.

[¶2] Ruffenach was admitted to practice law in North Dakota on October 5, 1981. He did not pay his license fee in 2006, and has not been licensed since December 31, 2005.

[¶3] On March 15, 2021, the North Dakota Disciplinary Board served notice under N.D.R. Lawyer Discipl. 4.4(B) that a certified copy of an order of suspension was entered by the Minnesota Supreme Court was received. The notice informed Ruffenach he had 30 days to file any claim that imposition of the identical discipline in North Dakota would be unwarranted and the reasons for the claim. On March 28, 2021, Ruffenach, filed an affidavit in which he consented to a suspension to coincide with the Minnesota suspension order. On August 27, 2021, the Disciplinary Board filed its recommendation that Ruffenach be suspended for 12 months, effective upon entry of judgment in this matter, with reinstatement conditioned on completion of the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination and compliance with continuing legal education requirements.

[¶4] The Court considered the matter, and

[¶5] ORDERED, that Michael R. Ruffenach is SUSPENDED from the practice of law in North Dakota for 12 months, effective upon entry of judgment in this matter.

[¶6] IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that Ruffenach must comply with N.D.R. Lawyer Discipl. 6.3 regarding notice.

[¶7] IT IS FURTHER ORDERED, that reinstatement is governed by N.D.R. Lawyer Discipl. 4.5 and is conditional upon on successful completion of the Multistate Professional Responsibility Examination and compliance with continuing legal education requirements.

[¶8] Jon J. Jensen, C.J.
Gerald W. VandeWalle
Daniel J. Crothers
Lisa Fair McEvers J
Jerod E. Tufte