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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release
October 28, 2025

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DISCIPLINE OF ATTORNEY SOUGHT

ST. PAUL -- A petition for disciplinary action seeking appropriate discipline of Maple Grove attorney Jessica L. Wassenberg was filed on October 27, 2025, in the Minnesota Supreme Court by Susan M. Humiston, Director of the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility. The petition was filed after Wassenberg waived a probable cause hearing before a Panel of the Lawyers Professional Responsibility Board. A copy of the petition is attached.

Wassenberg has 20 days to answer the allegations. The Minnesota Supreme Court will make the final decision on the appropriate discipline to be imposed, if any. Final action can include dismissal of the petition or discipline ranging from reprimand to disbarment.

- END -

FILE NO.

STATE OF MINNESOTA

IN SUPREME COURT

In Re Petition for Disciplinary Action
against JESSICA L. WASSENBERG,
a Minnesota Attorney,
Registration No. 0338126.

**PETITION FOR
DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

TO THE SUPREME COURT OF THE STATE OF MINNESOTA:

The Director of the Office of Lawyers Professional Responsibility (Director) files this petition upon the parties' agreement pursuant to Rules 10(a) and 12(a), Rules on Lawyers Professional Responsibility. The Director alleges:

The above-named attorney (respondent) was admitted to practice law in Minnesota on October 29, 2004. Respondent currently practices law in Maple Grove, Minnesota.

Respondent has committed the following unprofessional conduct warranting public discipline:

FIRST COUNT

The K.J. Matter

1. In April 2022, K.J. retained respondent to represent her in a child custody case initiated by J.P.S. (the father of two of her minor children) and a domestic abuse matter in which she had filed for an order for protection (OFP) against J.P.S. When respondent was retained, the court had already issued a scheduling order in the child custody case establishing deadlines with a pretrial conference on August 12, 2022, and trial on August 22, 2022.

2. Approximately one month later, respondent filed a certificate of representation in both the custody and domestic violence matters.

3. On May 23, 2022, the court issued an emergency *ex parte* OFP in the domestic violence matter. J.P.S. then requested a hearing, and an evidentiary hearing was scheduled for September 29, 2022.

4. On August 16, 2022, the court issued a temporary order for supervised parenting time awarding J.P.S. temporary visitation with the minor children. In addition, the custody trial was postponed pending the evidentiary hearing in the OFP matter.

5. On August 17, 2022, the court's calendar clerk handling the custody matter emailed respondent with a list of possible trial dates after the evidentiary hearing in the OFP matter and inquiring about her availability. Respondent did not respond.

6. On August 30, 2022, having not received a response from respondent, the calendar clerk emailed respondent again requesting a response. Respondent replied on August 30, 2022, apologizing for her lack of follow-up and advising that all the dates listed would work. The calendar clerk replied that the trial will be on call the week of November 14, 2022, with a pre-trial on November 4, 2022, and confirming notices were issued.

7. On September 29, 2022, the morning of the evidentiary hearing in the OFP matter, respondent contacted the court requesting a continuance due to illness; respondent copied K.J. and J.P.S. on this email. Respondent did not contact K.J. before sending her email to the court and the copied email was the only notification K.J. received. K.J. emailed respondent asking when she expected to hear from the court in response to the request for the continuance because K.J. wanted to get her children to school. Respondent did not respond. Later that morning, the court granted the

continuance request and re-set the hearing to the next month. Respondent forwarded the court's communication to K.J.

8. The continued evidentiary hearing was held October 25, 2022. Following the evidentiary hearing, the court issued an OFP effective for two years from the *ex parte* order or until May 23, 2024.

9. A pre-trial hearing took place in the custody matter on November 4, 2022, as previously scheduled. On November 8, 2022, the calendar clerk emailed several parties who were all scheduled for on call trials that week advising of their assigned trial dates and start times. K.J.'s custody matter remained "on-call status" and was not to report until further notification. Respondent forwarded that email to K.J. that same day with a one-line note, "No trial next week – waiting for notice of a new week to be on-call!"

10. On November 8, 2022, respondent wrote to the court explaining she erred in neglecting to request some of her planned witnesses appear at the upcoming trial via Zoom. Respondent had notified J.P.S. before contacting the court and he also requested some witnesses to appear via Zoom.

11. On November 9, 2022, K.J. wrote to respondent with concerns about her communication with J.P.S., who was *pro se* in the custody matter. K.J. was frustrated that J.P.S. had not retained his own lawyer and pointed out respondent was not J.P.S.'s lawyer. She was concerned for the safety of her children stating, "I have a bad feeling about this and I'm not sure what I can do to help prep for this so I can win and keep my family together like we are now." Respondent did not reply.

12. On November 14, 2022, the calendar clerk emailed respondent with open dates to re-schedule the trial. Respondent did not respond.

13. On November 28, 2022, respondent emailed the calendar clerk requesting the status of re-scheduling the trial block. Following communications with the calendar clerk, respondent advised that she could be available most of the week of February 6,

2023. Respondent also requested clarification about the process of determining which day of that week the matter would be heard. The calendar clerk advised that the judge typically gives the parties an idea of if and when they can expect to report for trial as part of the pre-trial hearing and reporting instructions are typically issued a week before the trial week. Respondent simply copied K.J. on the email thread scheduling the on-call trial; respondent did not communicate in any other way with K.J. about this.

14. In notices dated January 3, 2023, the court re-scheduled the trial in the custody matter for the week of February 6, 2023, with a pre-trial hearing on January 18, 2023.

15. On January 18, 2023, a pre-trial hearing was held in the custody matter. During this hearing, the parties were told to report to court on February 8, 2023.

16. On February 7, 2023, the calendar clerk emailed respondent advising that the February 8, 2023, trial date was being postponed and proposing a new date of the week of March 20, 2023. Respondent replied, expressing frustration about the continued delays and stating that she was available on March 23, 2023. Respondent copied K.J. on the email but did not discuss it with her. The clerk asked respondent if March 23, 2023, was the only day that week that she was available. Respondent did not respond.

17. By notice dated March 21, 2023, a status conference was scheduled for April 21, 2023. Respondent did not notify K.J. of the status conference date. Respondent and K.J. failed to appear for the status conference.

18. By notice dated April 24, 2023, the court set the trial date for June 12, 2023.

19. On April 27, 2023, J.P.S. emailed respondent asking that she remind K.J. that visitation is court ordered. Respondent forwarded J.P.S.'s email to K.J. that same day. K.J. replied, expressing frustration related to the court ordered visits, explaining her situation, and stating "I'm not sure what you want to respond back to him about this." Respondent did not reply to either K.J. or J.P.S.

20. On May 4, 2023, J.P.S. emailed respondent asking that she tell K.J. to schedule times for weekly visits. J.P.S. stated that the family access center told him that K.J. does not respond to them to schedule the visits. Respondent forwarded J.P.S.'s email to K.J. that same day and asked K.J. to provide documentation of the availability of the visits and her inability due to conflicts and the kids schedules. On May 5, 2023, K.J. emailed respondent twice addressing these issues. Respondent did not reply.

21. On May 8, 2023, J.P.S. emailed respondent a question regarding trial exhibits and advised respondent that he planned to file a motion to hold K.J. in contempt for not following court orders and scheduling weekly visits. Respondent forwarded the email to K.J. that same day with no comment or further explanation. That same day, K.J. replied that she had just tried to call respondent and expressing frustration with the ordered visitation. Respondent did not reply.

22. On May 19, 2023, J.P.S. emailed respondent with new evidence that he planned to submit since the case had been continued. Respondent forwarded the email to K.J. that same day, again with no additional comment or explanation. Later that day, K.J. emailed respondent asking if respondent was going to respond to J.P.S. about the issues in K.J.'s email to respondent a few weeks prior. K.J. also expressed many concerns about the evidence J.P.S. was planning on submitting in the upcoming trial. Respondent replied, advising that she was still having issues with her email and had not received K.J.'s email the previous week. Respondent advised K.J. of some concerns related to K.J.'s non-cooperation with court ordered visits. K.J. replied that same day at 1:06 p.m. and again at 1:09 p.m., expressing frustration surrounding the court ordered visits and the stress the visits cause the children. K.J. also stated, "I tried to call you but left a message. We need to connect." Respondent did not respond.

23. On June 7, 2023, the calendar clerk emailed respondent, copying K.J. and J.P.S. directly, reminding them of their trial scheduled for June 12, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

24. On June 9, 2023, K.J. emailed respondent with questions related to the upcoming trial.

25. On June 12, 2023, the trial occurred as scheduled. Following trial, the court ordered respondent to submit proposed findings and a redacted pay stub for K.J. by June 26, 2023.

26. On June 26, 2023, respondent emailed the calendar clerk requesting an extension of one week for the proposed findings and pay stub. Respondent stated that she had been dealing with a medical issue for the majority of the previous two weeks; respondent copied K.J. on this email but did not communicate with K.J. in any other way. The calendar clerk advised respondent to submit a request to the court. Later that day, respondent filed a letter to the court acknowledging that her proposed findings were due that day and requesting a seven-day extension for her submission, with a new due date of July 3, 2023. Respondent did not follow up to confirm that the extension had been granted until the next day. The court granted respondent's request for an extension to July 3, 2023.

27. On July 3, 2023, respondent emailed the calendar clerk the proposed findings and advising that she planned to e-file the proposed findings later that morning. Respondent did not provide her client's pay sub information, stating that she had not yet received either parties' income information and expected K.J.'s information after the holiday. On July 3, 2023, respondent electronically filed the proposed findings, but did not submit any redacted pay stubs as ordered by the court and did not request any relief or an extension related to this requirement of the court order.

28. On July 7, 2023, respondent prepared a letter submitting K.J.'s most recent pay stubs explaining that K.J. was unemployed so the most recent pay stub was dated June 16, 2023. However, respondent failed to submit or file this information with the court.

29. On September 22, 2023, the court entered its findings of fact, conclusions of law, and order for judgment, ordering sole legal and physical custody of the minor children to K.J. subject to J.P.S.'s parenting time. However, because the court had not received K.J.'s paystubs from respondent, the court stated that it did not have adequate financial information to set the parties' child support obligations and a child support hearing to calculate basic, medical, and childcare support was scheduled for October 24, 2023. Respondent did not notify K.J. of this hearing date.

30. In addition, the court set the following deadlines in its order: (1) no later than seven days prior to the hearing, the parties were to submit to the court income and banking information; (2) within 14 days of the order, the parties were to contact the FamilyWise St. Paul location to provide the center with the information necessary to establish supervised visits; and (3) the joint minor children were to participate in reunification therapy with a neutral qualified reunification therapist of K.J.'s choosing. A six-month review hearing was also scheduled for March 22, 2024, to consider whether both parties were complying with the order and whether any modifications to parenting time were needed. Two weeks before the March 2024, hearing, K.J. was required to file a status report form the children's therapist, detailing the children's progress in therapy, the status of participating in therapy with J.P.S., and any other issues or concerns the therapist would like to bring up with the court. Respondent received notice of this order, but did not communicate with K.J. regarding the deadlines and dates of hearings.

31. Respondent failed to meet the deadlines in the court's order regarding the submissions before the child support hearing. Specifically, respondent failed to submit the income and banking information seven days before the hearing and failed to contact FamilyWise to provide the information necessary to establish supervised visits within 14 days of the court's order.

32. On October 24, 2023, respondent and K.J. failed to appear for the scheduled child support hearing.

33. The next day, the court issued an order finding that K.J. was not in compliance with the September 2023, order because she failed to submit her income and banking records seven days before the hearing and, without that information, the court was unable to calculate or order child support. The decision regarding child support was reserved and the court noted that the parties may bring a motion to address child support at a later date.

34. On December 13, 2023, J.P.S. filed a motion for contempt based on the failure to comply with the September 2023 court order; this motion was scheduled to be heard on January 16, 2024. The court issued notice of a hearing. Respondent received this notice and motion, but did not provide them to K.J. and did not communicate with K.J. about the hearing date.

35. On January 16, 2024, respondent and K.J. failed to appear for the hearing on the motion for contempt.

36. On January 17, 2024, the court issued a notice of hearing notifying the parties of a motion hearing scheduled for March 22, 2024. The court clerk noted that this notice was "Eserved + emailed + mailed." In addition, the court also sent the motion, affidavit, notice of remote hearing, and order to show cause to the sheriff of Hennepin County requesting that K.J. be personally served. Respondent emailed a copy of the notice to K.J. with no explanation.

37. That day, respondent emailed K.J. copies of some of the motion paperwork that J.P.S. had filed. Respondent included a short note in the subject line of the email asking K.J., "do you know whats [sic] going on with this?"

38. Later that day, a court assistant emailed respondent courtesy copies of the motion for contempt, affidavit in support of motion, order to show cause, and the notice of hearing. The court assistant noted that the January 16, 2024, motion hearing had

been re-scheduled to March 22, 2024, because respondent and K.J. failed to appear and that the March 22, 2024, hearing had originally been scheduled as a review hearing under the custody order; it was now a motion hearing due to respondent and K.J.'s non-appearance. Respondent forwarded the court assistant's email and attachments to K.J., again with no explanation.

39. In response, K.J. emailed respondent requesting a time when they could meet and stating, "[a]pparently you and I missed a scheduled court date on January 16th that I read about. How will this absence affect going forward?"

40. On February 7, 2024, after K.J. had been personally served with the motion, affidavit, notice of remote hearing, and order to show cause, K.J. emailed respondent informing her of the service.

41. On March 11, 2024, respondent filed a response to the motion for contempt and an affidavit of K.J. In the affidavit, K.J. stated that she was working on acquiring her federal and state tax returns for 2022 and 2023, and her bank statements from January 1, 2023, to the present.

42. Respondent and K.J. appeared for the hearing on March 22, 2024. During this hearing, respondent stated that K.J. was unemployed and had no financial information to submit, which was inconsistent with K.J.'s affidavit that respondent had submitted before the hearing. The court requested that respondent submit a letter confirming K.J.'s employment status and respondent indicated that she would. However, respondent failed to do so.

43. On March 25, 2024, the court issued an order granting J.P.S.'s contempt motion, in part. The court found K.J. in contempt for failing to comply with the court's September 2023, order. The court stated that K.J. failed to contact FamilyWise within 14 days of the court's order to begin the intake process for supervised visits and was ordered to immediately do so and provide verification of completing the intake process by March 29, 2024. Additionally, K.J. was ordered to provide verification of the

children's participation or enrollment in reunification therapy by April 30, 2024. K.J. was further ordered to obtain a post office box and provide the address to J.P.S. within 30 days.

44. Respondent failed to provide verification of completion of the FamilyWise intake process to the court by March 29, 2024. Upon receipt of an email from the court after this deadline passed, respondent then filed the required documentation on April 4, 2024. Respondent acknowledged that she was responsible for the failure to comply with the court order to produce this information.

45. During May 2024, K.J. attempted to contact respondent several times via email. Respondent did not respond. For example, on May 20, 2024, K.J. emailed respondent stating that she had made several time-sensitive requests with no response from respondent and that she would seek other counsel if respondent did not respond. On May 28, 2024, having heard nothing from respondent, K.J.'s father also emailed respondent requesting an update on K.J.'s matter. The next day, respondent emailed K.J. an apology and advised that K.J.'s emails since May 1, 2024, were in respondent's junk folder, which she does not check.

46. On June 6, 2024, J.P.S. filed a motion for contempt for continued failures to comply with the September 2023 order; the motion was scheduled to be heard on July 2, 2024. At this time, K.J. spoke to respondent and terminated the representation.

47. The next day, respondent filed an affidavit of service stating that her office had served a notice of withdrawal of counsel on J.P.S. However, respondent failed to file the notice of withdrawal of counsel itself, which resulted in respondent remaining counsel of record in the matter. Respondent never filed a notice of withdrawal.

48. On June 11, 2024, K.J. filed a request for a continuance of the July 2024 contempt hearing, explaining that she needed time to obtain new legal representation. The court denied her request.

49. Following the July 2024 hearing, the court issued an order scheduling a review hearing for August 13, 2024. However, since respondent had not filed her notice of withdrawal, only respondent, and not K.J., was sent the notice of this order. Respondent did not provide this notice to K.J. or notify her of the hearing. K.J. did not receive notice of this hearing and, as a result, failed to appear.

50. Respondent's conduct in failing to work diligently on K.J.'s matter throughout the representation including failing to appear at hearings on April 21, 2023, October 24, 2023, and January 16, 2024, violated Rules 1.3 and 3.2, Minnesota Rules of Professional Conduct (MRPC).

51. Respondent's conduct in failing to respond to reasonable requests for information from K.J. violated Rule 1.4(a)(4), MRPC, and respondent's failure to explain important case events as they occurred so that K.J. could make informed decisions about the representation violated Rule 1.4(b), MRPC.

52. Respondent's conduct in failing to comply with the court's September 22, 2023, order and March 25, 2024, order violated Rules 3.2 and 3.4(c), MRPC.

53. Respondent's conduct in failing to file a notice of withdrawal upon termination of the representation thus depriving her client of required case notifications and failing to provide her client with notice of a scheduled hearing violated Rule 1.16(d), MRPC.

SECOND COUNT

The J.S. Matter

54. On February 10, 2022, J.S. retained respondent to represent her in a child protection matter including the transfer of legal custody and parental rights. J.S. paid a flat fee of \$5,000 to respondent.

55. Respondent's written flat fee agreement contained language regarding the calculation of any refund that attempted to convert a flat fee representation to a capped

hourly representation. Specifically, respondent's written flat fee agreement provided, in relevant part: "In the event the representation is terminated prior to the conclusion of the matter, for any reason, Client shall be billed at the hourly rate of \$300.00/hr for the Principle Attorney and \$175/hr for the Associate Attorney and Client Advocate up to the amount of the initial flat fee. Any remaining funds shall be refunded."

56. On March 11, 2022, respondent and J.S. appeared for a pre-trial hearing in the child protection matter. During the hearing, the court discussed scheduling the trial for April 19, 2022, and respondent advised that she was in trial that day. The court noted that, since respondent's client was intervening in the matter, her client would not be a necessary party at trial unless J.S. was subpoenaed to testify. Nevertheless, the court then set a trial date of April 26, 2022, to accommodate respondent's schedule. Respondent was aware that J.S. wanted to attend the trial.

57. On March 11, 2022, J.S. texted respondent requesting that respondent call her. Respondent did not respond.

58. Approximately two weeks before trial, J.S. texted respondent asking about the trial date and whether it would be held remotely. Respondent did not respond.

59. During this time, J.S. also left several voicemail messages for respondent inquiring about her matter and the upcoming trial. Respondent did not respond.

60. Approximately one week before the trial date, the court issued a notice converting the trial to Zoom. This notice was sent to respondent as counsel for J.S., however, she did not send it to J.S. until 9:30 p.m. the night before the trial, stating: "I apologize for getting this to you so late, the entire trial has been converted to Zoom, so definitely you can appear by Zoom. Note that my appearance has been excused, as I have other hearings at the same time." However, this was the first time respondent informed J.S. that she would not be appearing with her at the trial or that the trial would be via Zoom. At the hearing setting the trial date, respondent had not stated that she had a conflict with a trial on August 26, 2022, and did not request that her presence

be excused when the trial was set or any time thereafter. Rather, respondent only noted a scheduling conflict on August 19, 2022.

61. J.S. attended the April 26, 2022, trial without representation.

62. After the trial, J.S. left a voicemail message for respondent terminating the representation. Respondent did not respond or promptly refund to J.S. the unearned fees from the flat fee representation.

63. One month later, on May 26, 2022, respondent sent an email to J.S. responding to her termination of the relationship. In this email, respondent stated, "If you would like to reconsider and allow me to continue to represent you - let me know. Otherwise - I do wish you the best of luck in securing custody of [your grandchild]." Respondent still had not refund J.S.'s unearned fees.

64. On June 30, 2022, a substitution of counsel was filed in J.S.'s matter.

65. On August 25, 2022, having still not received a refund from respondent, J.S. contacted respondent by telephone and email requesting a refund of her \$5,000 fee given the *de minimus* assistance respondent had provided. Respondent emailed J.S., advising her that she would provide an accounting of the time spent on her case and let her know what refund was due on or before September 6, 2022. However, respondent failed to do so.

66. On September 19, 2022, and September 20, 2022, approximately four months after the representation was terminated, respondent issued a refund to J.S. of \$3,662.50, which respondent incorrectly calculated based on respondent's hourly rate.

67. Upon the Director notifying respondent that her flat fee agreement incorrectly converted a flat fee agreement to an hourly representation, respondent issued an additional \$87.50 refund to J.S. after re-calculating the amount owed based on her revised assessment of how far she had advanced the flat fee representation.

68. Respondent's conduct in failing to diligently work on the matter, including her failure to attend the trial with her client, violated Rule 1.3, MRPC.

69. Respondent's conduct in failing to keep her client reasonably informed about her matter and the status of the trial violated Rule 1.4(a)(3), MRPC.

70. Respondent's conduct in failing to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information violated Rule 1.4(a)(4), MRPC.

71. Respondent's conduct in failing to promptly refund unearned fees violated Rules 1.5(b)(3) and 1.16(d), MRPC.

THIRD COUNT

The A.D. and A.S. Matter

72. Respondent represented S.S., a Minnesota resident, in a dissolution and custody matter. A.D. and A.S. are residents of New York and live together; they have no connection to S.S. or respondent. While representing S.S., respondent errantly emailed confidential communications and attachments to A.S. that were intended for her client, S.S., at least seven times.

73. On September 21, 2021, respondent sent an erroneous email to A.S. meant for her client. This email was a carbon copy of an email to the judge handling the Minnesota dissolution and custody matter. This email contained respondent's requests regarding the testimony of a minor child, identified by name, involved in the custody matter as well as the name of another witness and their availability to testify in the upcoming trial.

74. That same morning, A.D. notified respondent that A.S. had received an email from respondent in error and inquired if respondent had sent the email.

75. Respondent replied to A.D. stating that she did, in fact, send the email.

76. On September 22, 2021, the next day, respondent sent a second erroneous email to A.S., intended for her client, S.S. The subject line of this email referenced "Exhibits 26-35" and attached copies of those documents. All these exhibits revealed information related to the representation and several contained sensitive information

related to respondent's client and the custody and dissolution matter. For example, one exhibit disclosed previous domestic abuse complaints and custody requests which S.S. had filed in Florida. The documents contain a detailed description of the domestic abuse and the names and dates of birth of two minor children. Another exhibit was a report from a chemical health assessor containing information about S.S.'s husband's history of substance abuse and medical history and a summary of past domestic violence and custody issues involving the minor children. Another exhibit contained information about the minor child's standardized test scores.

77. Within several hours, A.D. notified respondent that she had, again, sent an email to A.S. in error. A.D. again reminded respondent that this email address did not belong to her client and asked that she refrain from sending further documents to that email address.

78. Despite being notified twice that the email address she was using was incorrect, approximately a week later, respondent again sent two more emails to the same incorrect email address that were meant for her client.

79. In the first of these emails, respondent forwarded an email she had received from the court attaching a copy of the amended order for remote trial and contained a discussion regarding trial submissions.

80. The second email was a carbon copy of an email, with an attached subpoena, that respondent sent to a witness to schedule trial testimony. Respondent's email identified the witness and the schedule for the witness's trial testimony.

81. Soon after these two additional erroneous emails were sent, A.D. called respondent and left her a voicemail message reminding her, again, that the email address did not belong to her client and asking her to remove the incorrect email address. Respondent admits that she received this message, but did not return the call.

82. The next day, respondent sent a fifth email to the same incorrect email address meant for her client. This email was a carbon copy of a question respondent

submitted to the court regarding the upcoming trial in the dissolution and custody matter; this email identified witnesses and discussed information related to the matter and trial.

83. Later that same day, respondent emailed A.D. advising him that she had solved the confusion regarding the email addresses and thanked him for bringing it to her attention.

84. Approximately twelve hours later, however, respondent emailed two more messages to the same incorrect email address meant for her client. First, respondent forwarded an email she had received from an Assistant Hennepin County Attorney in response to a question regarding concerns about her client's case. The second email forwarded a proposed judgment and decree containing, among other things, the full names and birthdates of all parties, including the minor children, information regarding checking accounts, income and debt, and a spousal maintenance determination.

85. Within hours, A.D. again emailed respondent notifying her that A.S. had received additional emails in error and requested, again, that respondent do whatever was needed to stop sending communications and documents to that email address.

86. Respondent responded to A.D.'s email, advising that she had received his voicemail and stating that her client had set up a different email address for future use.

87. Respondent's conduct in sending several emails to A.S. that contained confidential information related to the representation of her client, S.S., despite being alerted repeatedly that she was using an incorrect email address violated Rules 1.1 and 1.6(a), MRPC.

FOURTH COUNT

The J.M.S. Matter

88. On June 30, 2022, J.M.S. retained respondent to represent him in the “[e]stablishment of paternity, custody, parenting time and child support.” At the time respondent was retained, a custody matter was already pending in Itasca County. J.M.S. paid a flat fee in the amount of \$2,500.

89. On July 6, 2022, respondent filed a substitution of counsel in the matter, providing notification that she was representing J.M.S.

90. On September 14, 2022, a stipulated temporary parenting time order, which had been electronically signed by the parties and attorneys, was filed with a request for the judge to sign. Two days later, the judge signed this order and issued a scheduling order setting the matter for trial.

91. Between August 30, 2023, and September 6, 2023, J.M.S. texted respondent approximately eight times with no response from respondent. In his messages, J.M.S. stated his belief that respondent had abandoned the representation. For example, in one message, J.M.S. stated, “Question, are you representing me anymore?” Respondent did not respond.

92. On September 7, 2023, J.M.S. terminated the representation and requested a refund. Approximately a week later, respondent filed a notice of withdrawal of counsel. On September 25, 2023, respondent issued a refund of \$2,000 to J.M.S.

93. Respondent’s conduct in failing to promptly comply with reasonable requests for information from her client violated Rule 1.4(a)(4), MRPC.

FIFTH COUNT

The C.T. Matter

94. On September 24, 2024, respondent was retained by C.T. for modification of custody and parenting time in exchange for a flat fee of \$5,000. C.T. paid this flat fee to respondent in cash on the same day that the flat fee retainer agreement was signed.

95. Respondent sent C.T. a text message acknowledging receipt of the \$5,000 cash payment. The receipt for this payment was not countersigned by the payor as required by Appendix 1(II)(2) to Rule 1.15(h), MRPC.

96. Respondent's failure to maintain a receipt for the cash payment received, countersigned by the payor, violated Rule 1.5(h), MRPC, and Appendix 1(II)(2).

SIXTH COUNT

Improper Advertising

97. Respondent is a sole practitioner.

98. From April 21, 2014, to January 31, 2023, respondent named her law firm "Wassenberg Law Group LLC."

99. When respondent initially named her practice, she had an associate attorney and a victim's advocate on staff. Eventually both individuals transitioned to other employment opportunities. However, despite not replacing them, respondent continued to use the name "Wassenberg Law Group LLC."

100. Respondent's use of "Wassenberg Law Group LLC" was misleading as it suggested that other attorneys or individuals worked with respondent.

101. When the Director's Office notified respondent of this issue, respondent changed her name to Wassenberg Legal Solutions effective February 10, 2023.

102. However, her current legal services agreement continues to reference Wassenberg Law Group.

103. Rule 7.1, MRPC, provides that a “lawyer shall not make a false or misleading communication about the lawyer or the lawyer's services. A communication is false or misleading if it contains a material misrepresentation of fact of law, or omits a fact necessary to make the statement considered as a whole not materially misleading.”

104. Respondent’s firm name and statements on her law firm’s website violated Rule 7.1, MRPC.

WHEREFORE, the Director respectfully prays for an order of this Court imposing appropriate discipline, 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.

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