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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **EOIR Announces Latest Disciplinary Actions Under Rules of Professional Conduct** *Four Attorneys Immediately Suspended; Eight Receive Final Orders; Two are Reinstated*

FALLS CHURCH, Va. – The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) has recently taken disciplinary action against 12 attorneys for violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct for immigration practitioners. Two attorneys were reinstated.

EOIR announces these disciplinary actions to inform the public about practitioners who are no longer authorized to represent clients before an immigration tribunal. In most cases, EOIR has disciplined the practitioner based on a sanction imposed by another jurisdiction or a criminal conviction.

Disciplinary proceedings begin when the Office of the General Counsel of either EOIR or the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Department of Homeland Security (DHS), files a Notice of Intent to Discipline with EOIR's Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA). The disciplinary action can result in the suspension or expulsion of a practitioner before the immigration courts, the BIA, and DHS. Before a suspended or expelled attorney can resume the practice of law before the immigration courts, the BIA, and DHS, the BIA must reinstate that attorney.

EOIR has recently taken the following disciplinary actions:

#### **Immediate Suspensions**

The BIA ordered the immediate suspension of the following attorneys:

- **Howard Teng-Hao Mei:** The Court of Appeals of Maryland disbarred Mr. Mei by consent. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on Sept. 9, 2009, based on his disbarment in Maryland and pending final disposition of his case.

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## Attorney Discipline

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- **Navron Ponds:** The District of Columbia Court of Appeals disbarred Mr. Ponds from the practice of law in the District of Columbia for engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation, and that seriously interferes with the administration of justice. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on Sept. 15, 2009, based on Mr. Ponds's disbarment in the District of Columbia and pending final disposition of his case.
- **Fernando J. Ramos:** The Supreme Court of Tennessee suspended Mr. Ramos from the practice of law for three years for numerous violations of the state's Rules of Professional Conduct, including misconduct involving competence, diligence and communication. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on Aug. 19, 2009, based on Mr. Ramos's three-year suspension in Tennessee and pending final disposition of his case.
- **Barton Carl Winter:** The Supreme Court of Minnesota indefinitely suspended Mr. Winter from the practice of law for multiple violations of the state's Rules of Professional Conduct, including making false statements to a tribunal and engaging in conduct involving dishonesty, fraud, deceit, or misrepresentation, and that is prejudicial to the administration of justice. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on Sept. 15, 2009, based on Mr. Winter's suspension in Minnesota and pending final disposition of his case.

### Final Orders of Discipline

- **Michael RJ Davis:** The District of Columbia Court of Appeals disbarred Mr. Davis by consent. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on Aug. 4, 2009, based on Mr. Davis's consent to disbarment and pending final disposition of his case. A final order of Sept. 15, 2009, expels Mr. Davis from practice before immigration tribunals, effective Aug. 4, 2009, based on his consent to disbarment in the District of Columbia.
- **Roberto E. de la Garza, a.k.a. Eddie de la Garza:** A final order of Aug. 28, 2009, suspends Mr. de la Garza from practice before immigration tribunals for three years, effective July 28, 2009, based on his one-year suspension in Texas.
- **Tian Li:** A final order of Aug. 13, 2009, suspends Mr. Li from practice before immigration tribunals for three years, effective July 16, 2009, based on his three-year suspension in Michigan.
- **Christian de Olivas:** A final order of Aug. 14, 2009, suspends Mr. de Olivas from practice before immigration tribunals for two years, effective March 20, 2009, based on his one-year suspension in California, and his numerous misrepresentations of his status as an attorney before the San Diego and San Pedro Immigration Courts, and the BIA.

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- **Manjit Kaur Rai, a.k.a. Manjit Kaur Kang:** A final order of Sept. 15, 2009, expels Ms. Rai from practice before immigration tribunals, effective July 27, 2009, based on her criminal conviction in California.
- **Jagprit Singh Sekhon:** A final order of Aug. 28, 2009, expels Mr. Sekhon from practice before immigration tribunals, effective July 27, 2009, based on his criminal conviction in California.
- **Saladin Eric Shakir:** The Court of Appeals of Maryland indefinitely suspended Mr. Shakir from practice before immigration tribunals for numerous violations of the state's Rules of Professional Conduct, including misconduct involving diligence, communication, and charging unreasonable fees. The BIA granted the government's petition for immediate suspension on Aug. 11, 2009, based on Mr. Shakir's suspension in Maryland and pending final disposition of his case. A final order of Sept. 15, 2009, suspends Mr. Shakir from practice before immigration tribunals for 18 months, effective Aug. 11, 2009, based on his indefinite suspension in Maryland.
- **Uzair Mansoor Siddiqui:** A final order of Aug. 28, 2009, expels Mr. Siddiqui from practice before immigration tribunals, effective Dec. 9, 2008, based on his two interim suspensions and his consent to revocation in Virginia.

### Reinstatements

- **Guy D. Rutherford:** Mr. Rutherford was reinstated to practice before immigration tribunals on Aug. 4, 2009, after he completed his BIA-imposed six-month suspension.
- **Anil Shah:** Mr. Shah was reinstated to practice before immigration tribunals on Aug. 4, 2009, after he completed his BIA-imposed six-month suspension.

### Background

The Rules of Professional Conduct appear in Title 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations (8 C.F.R. §§ 1003 and 1292). They include provisions specifying grounds for disciplinary action, requirements for receiving and investigating complaints, and procedures for conducting hearings. The rules also authorize the BIA to suspend immediately a practitioner who has been subject to disbarment, suspension, or resignation with an admission of misconduct as imposed by a federal or state court, or who has been convicted of a serious crime, pending a summary proceeding and final sanction. The Rules of Professional Conduct are available at [http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/vll/fedreg/2000\\_2001/fr27jn00R.pdf](http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/vll/fedreg/2000_2001/fr27jn00R.pdf) and [http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/vll/fedreg/2008\\_2009/fr18dec08c.pdf](http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/vll/fedreg/2008_2009/fr18dec08c.pdf).

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## Attorney Discipline

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A “List of Disciplined Practitioners” is available at <http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/profcond/chart.htm>. In an effort to provide more detailed information about individual attorney discipline cases, every immediate suspension or final order issued can be accessed through this list by clicking on the highlighted data link.

Additional information about the Attorney Discipline Program can be found at <http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/press/00/profcond.htm> and <http://www.usdoj.gov/eoir/press/09/AttorneyDisciplineFactSheet.pdf>.

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*The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) is an agency within the Department of Justice. Under delegated authority from the Attorney General, immigration judges and the Board of Immigration Appeals interpret and adjudicate immigration cases according to United States immigration laws. EOIR’s immigration judges conduct administrative court proceedings in immigration courts located throughout the nation. They determine whether foreign-born individuals—who are charged by the Department of Homeland Security with violating immigration law—should be ordered removed from the United States or should be granted relief from removal and be permitted to remain in this country. The Board of Immigration Appeals primarily reviews appeals of decisions by immigration judges. EOIR’s Office of the Chief Administrative Hearing Officer adjudicates immigration-related employment cases. EOIR is committed to ensuring fairness in all of the cases it adjudicates.*