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NEWS RELEASE

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EOIR Announces Disciplinary Actions Against 11 Immigration Practitioners

Eight Attorneys Receive Immediate Suspensions; Three Others, Final Orders

The Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) has taken disciplinary action against 11 attorneys after charging them with violations of the Rules of Professional Conduct for Immigration Practitioners provided in Title 8 of the Code of Federal Regulations (8 CFR Parts 3 and 292). The attorneys' rule violations arose out of sanctions imposed by other jurisdictions.

Disciplinary proceedings began in each case with a Petition for Immediate Suspension and Notice of Intent to Discipline filed with the Board of Immigration Appeals (the Board) by EOIR's Office of the General Counsel. The Board then ordered each attorney's immediate suspension from practice before the Immigration Courts, the Board, and the Immigration and Naturalization Service and required the attorney to respond to the alleged violations.

On March 8, 2001, the Board ordered the immediate suspensions of the following attorneys for the reasons stated:

David L. Brehmer, suspended indefinitely by the Supreme Court of Minnesota for a minimum of 1 year;

William Roman Gardner, suspended by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit for 6 months;

John Hykel, pled guilty before the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania to charges of making false statements to the Department of Labor in connection with his immigration practice;

William P. Kaszynski, disbarred by the Supreme Court of Minnesota;

Mackson P. McDowell, suspended by the Supreme Court of the State of New York, Appellate Division, Fourth Judicial Department, for 2 years;

Andrew Robert Sebok, suspended by the Virginia State Bar Disciplinary Board for 9 months;

Walter Wenko, disbarred by the Supreme Court of California; and

Valerie L. Yaeger, suspended from the practice of law in the State of Michigan for 180 days.

Final Orders of Discipline

In addition, the Board issued Final Orders of Discipline against the three attorneys named below after each failed to respond as required to the Notice of Intent to Discipline. The failure to respond in a timely manner to allegations in a Notice of Intent to Discipline constitutes admission of the alleged rule violations.

Justin Jin-Lin Ong, convicted of the crimes of Visa Fraud and Subscribing to False Return, sentenced by the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas to 4 months' imprisonment and 3 years' supervised release thereafter, and ordered to surrender his law license and resign from the practice of law, was expelled by final order of the Board on February 26, 2001.

Leon Rountree, Jr., convicted in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California upon pleading guilty to two counts of making false statements to the Immigration and Naturalization Service and suspended by the State Bar of California on an interim basis pending the final disposition of disciplinary proceedings against him, was expelled by final order of the Board on March 2, 2001.

Ida Katherine Warren, suspended by the Supreme Court of Indiana for 1 year, was suspended indefinitely by final order of the Board on February 26, 2001 (effective October 31, 2000, the date of the Board's initial order of immediate suspension).

In each of the matters cited above, the Board directed the attorney "to promptly notify, in writing, any clients with cases currently pending before the Board, the Immigration Courts, or the Service" that he or she may no longer represent clients before these tribunals.

The amended rules of professional conduct, published in the *Federal Register* on June 27, 2000, and effective on July 27, 2000, include provisions specifying grounds for disciplinary action, requirements for receiving and investigating complaints, and procedures for conducting hearings. The rules also authorize the Board to immediately suspend a practitioner who has been subject to disbarment,

suspension, or resignation with an admission of misconduct as imposed by a State or Federal court, pending a summary proceeding and final sanction.

EOIR announces these disciplinary actions to inform the public about practitioners who are not authorized to represent any matter before an immigration tribunal. EOIR also posts a list of suspended and expelled practitioners on its Web site at www.usdoj.gov/eoir.

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