ARKANSAS SUPREME COURT
COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

NOTICE OF SUSPENSION OF ATTORNEY'S PRIVILEGE TO PRACTICE LAW

IN RE: **BARBARA A. KETRING-BEUCH**
ARKANSAS BAR ID #97074
CPC Docket No. 2006-170

Attorney Barbara A. Ketring-Beuch, an attorney practicing law primarily in North Little Rock, Arkansas, Bar ID #97074 has been suspended from the practice of law within the jurisdiction of this State.

The Committee on Professional Conduct suspended Arkansas Attorney Barbara A. Ketring-Beuch's License for a period of Six (6) months effective August 1, 2007.

Please be advised that a suspended attorney shall not be reinstated to the practice of law in this State until the Arkansas Supreme Court has received an affirmative vote by a majority of the Committee. If, and at such time as the Committee may reinstate the attorney, you will be provided notice of the reinstatement and the effective date thereof.

If you have any questions in this regard or you have information evincing the attorney's continued practice contrary to the status of her license, please contact this office.

8-1-2007
Date

Stark Ligon

Stark Ligon, Executive Director
Office of Professional Conduct
625 Marshall Street, Room 110
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 376-0313

BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT COMMITTEE ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT
PANEL A

FILED
AUG 01 2007
LESLIE W. STEEN
CLERK

IN RE: **BARBARA A. KETRING-BEUCH**
Arkansas Bar ID #97074
CPC Docket No. 2006-170

FINDINGS AND ORDER

The formal charges of misconduct upon which this Findings and Order is based were developed from information provided to the Committee by Circuit Judge Alice Gray of Pulaski County on November 28, 2006. The information related to the representation of Jakeeta Young in No. DR-2005-3584 by Respondent Barbara A. Ketring-Beuch, an attorney practicing primarily in North Little Rock, Arkansas. On January 2, 2007, Respondent was served with a formal complaint, to which she filed a timely Response.

Ms. Ketring-Beuch represented Jakeeta Young in a divorce proceeding, Pulaski Circuit No. DR-2005-3584, styled *Jakeeta L. Young v. David C. Young*, before Judge Alice Gray. Mr. Young was represented by James W. Stanley. At a final hearing on May 11, 2006, which Ms. Ketring-Beuch attended with her client, Judge Gray granted a divorce to Defendant/Counter-Plaintiff David Young and made certain rulings regarding property issues. Mr. Stanley promptly prepared a proposed Decree of Divorce and mailed it to Ms. Ketring-Beuch on May 11, 2006, for her approval, along with an enclosed Quitclaim Deed for her client to execute and his trust check #4213 for $11,395.33 from Mr. Young, payable to Jakeeta Young and Ms. Ketring-Beuch, for Ms. Young's share of the equity in the Young's home. Ms. Ketring-Beuch failed to approve and return the Decree of Divorce and the properly executed Quitclaim Deed. The check was endorsed by Ms. Young, Ms. Ketring-Beuch, and Leonard Boyle, Ms. Young's brother, and was given by

Ms. Ketring-Beuch to Ms. Young to be negotiated, which she did, receiving all the funds represented by the check. On June 6, 2006, Ms. Ketring-Beuch acknowledged the signature of Ms. Young on the Quitclaim Deed and then stuck the deed in her office file until December 7, 2006, when she discovered the deed and delivered it to Stark Ligon at the Office of Professional Conduct, after he contacted Ms. Ketring-Beuch about the Young matter. Mr. Ligon then forwarded the original deed to Mr. Stanley for his client's use. On May 30, 2006, Mr. Stanley sent the proposed Decree of Divorce to Judge Gray, with copy to Ms. Ketring-Beuch, under the "five days to object" rule. On August 29, 2006, Mr. Stanley wrote Ms. Ketring-Beuch requesting approval and return of the Decree and Deed immediately, after a hearing on the non-entry of the Decree.

Faced with no response from Ms. Ketring-Beuch, with the approval of Ms. Young, on October 10, 2006, Judge Gray appointed attorney Carrol Ann Hicks to represent Jakeeta Young for the purpose of getting a decree approved and entered. Ms. Hicks conferred with Ms. Young, approved the proposed Decree earlier prepared by Mr. Stanley, and submitted the Decree to Judge Gray by letter dated October 26, 2006. Judge Gray approved the Decree of Divorce on November 20, 2006, and caused it to be filed that same day. On November 22, 2006, Judge Gray referred the matter and Ms. Ketring-Beuch to the Committee for action, based on her failure to represent her client to the completion of the divorce matter.

Upon consideration of the formal complaint and attached exhibit materials, the response to it, and other matters before it, and the Arkansas Model Rules of Professional Conduct, Panel A of the Arkansas Supreme Court Committee on Professional Conduct finds:

A. The conduct of Ms. Ketring-Beuch violated Rule 1.1 in that she failed to employ the

legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation of Jakeeta Young when Ms. Ketring-Beuch failed to work with opposing counsel and the court after the May 11, 2006, to ensure that an acceptable final decree of divorce was presented and approved and when she failed until December 7, 2006, to deliver to the grantee the Quitclaim Deed executed before her by her client on June 2, 2006. Arkansas Rule 1.1 requires that a lawyer shall provide competent representation to a client. Competent representation requires the legal knowledge, skill, thoroughness and preparation reasonably necessary for the representation.

B. The conduct of Ms. Ketring-Beuch violated Rule 1.3 in that from May 11, 2006, through October 2006, she failed to respond to attempts by opposing counsel and the court to obtain her approval for a proposed Decree of Divorce to conclude this case. Arkansas Rule 1.3 requires that a lawyer shall act with reasonable diligence and promptness in representing a client.

C. The conduct of Ms. Ketring-Beuch violated Rule 3.4(c) in that she had an obligation, under court rules, to represent her divorce case client, Jakeeta Young, until either relieved by the court of the representation or dismissed by the client, yet she failed to represent the client after the final hearing on May 11, 2006, and failed to respond to the court's efforts to get her to perform her attorney function for the client after May 11, 2006, effectively abandoning her client. Arkansas Rule 3.4(c) requires that a lawyer shall not knowingly disobey an obligation under the rules of a tribunal except for an open refusal based on an assertion that no valid obligation exists.

D. The conduct of Ms. Ketring-Beuch violated Rule 4.4(a) in that her actions in failing to respond to the court and opposing counsel after May 11, 2006, in the divorce case of *Young v. Young* had no substantial purpose other to delay and burden Mr. Young, and her client, in obtaining their legal rights to a divorce decree and to settlement of the property issue between

them involving the residence property. Her actions in failing until December 7, 2006, to deliver to Mr. Young, or to anyone else for his benefit, a deed executed by her client on June 2, 2006, before her as a notary public, had no substantial purpose other to delay and burden Mr. Young in obtaining his legal right to settlement of a major property issue in the litigation. Arkansas Rule 4.4(a) requires that, in representing a client, a lawyer shall not use means that have no substantial purpose other than to embarrass, delay, or burden a third person, or use methods of obtaining evidence that violate the legal rights of such a person.

E. The conduct of Ms. Ketring-Beuch violated Rule 8.4(d) in that her actions after May 11, 2006, in effectively abandoning her client, Jakeeta Young, in her divorce action, caused the court to have to conduct additional proceedings and to have to appoint, and Mr. Young to now have to pay for the services of a replacement attorney, Ms. Hicks, for Ms. Young, to conclude the divorce, conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice. Arkansas Rule 8.4(d) provides that it is professional misconduct for a lawyer to engage in conduct that is prejudicial to the administration of justice.

WHEREFORE, it is the decision and order of the Arkansas Supreme Court Committee on Professional Conduct, acting through its authorized Panel A, that the Arkansas law license of **BARBARA A. KETRING-BEUCH**, Arkansas Bar ID# 97074, be, and hereby is, **SUSPENDED FOR SIX (6) MONTHS** for her conduct in this matter, and she is assessed Committee case costs of $50.00. The suspension shall become effective on the date this Findings and Order is filed of record with the Clerk of the Arkansas Supreme Court. The costs assessed herein shall be payable by cashier's check or money order payable to the "Clerk, Arkansas Supreme Court" delivered to the Office of Professional Conduct with thirty (30) days of the date

this Findings and Order is filed of record with the Clerk of the Arkansas Supreme Court.

ARKANSAS SUPREME COURT COMMITTEE
ON PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT - PANEL A

By: Jerry D. Pinson
Jerry D. Pinson, Chair, Panel A

Date: May 29, 2007