

People v. Anthony Henry Veto. 20PDJ051. August 19, 2020.

The Presiding Disciplinary Judge approved the parties' conditional admission of misconduct and publicly censured Anthony Henry Veto (attorney registration number 00459), effective August 19, 2020.

Veto was friends with a client for more than forty years. During that time, he occasionally completed small legal matters for the client but never billed him. Veto originally prepared a will for the client approximately twenty years ago and added amendments and codicils to it from time to time. At some point, the client requested that Veto include himself as a beneficiary of a share of the estate. In November 2018, the client's house burned down and he was hospitalized for smoke inhalation. Several days later, Veto and his law clerk visited the client in the hospital, and the client executed a revised will that same day. The revised will named Veto and his firm as the estate's personal representative, which was to be paid Veto's hourly rate for any service. The revised will also named Veto as a beneficiary of a portion of the estate, to be transferred to Veto's wife should he not survive the client by more than thirty days.

In the weeks following the hospital visit, the client's son called Veto and notified him that his father was not in the right state of mind to sign important legal documents and that he thought it was wrong for Veto to include himself as a beneficiary of the client's estate. Veto consulted the Colorado Bar Ethics hotline and reviewed Colo. RPC 1.8(c); he determined that it was improper to assist in the bequest of part of the estate to himself, so he drafted a codicil to the client's will removing the bequest. Veto then contacted the client's son, who had been granted financial power of attorney for his father, to arrange signing of the new codicil. The son was unresponsive and the codicil was never signed. The client later executed another will and has since passed away.

Through this conduct, Veto violated Colo. RPC 1.8(c) (a lawyer shall not solicit any substantial gift from a client or prepare on behalf of a client an instrument giving the lawyer any substantial gift unless the lawyer is related to the client).

The case file is public per C.R.C.P. 251.31.