



ADMINISTRATIVE
E-FILED
CNMI SUPREME COURT
E-filed: Jun 22 2007 2:14PM
Clerk Review: Jun 22 2007 3:55PM
Filing ID: 15324186
Case No.: Multi-case
Martha Mendiola

IN THE
SUPREME COURT
OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

In Re the Bar Matter of
JOSEPH ALDAN ARRIOLA

SUPREME COURT NO. 2007-ADM-0012-ADA
SUPERIOR COURT DISCIPLINARY COMPLAINT NO. 06-001

ORDER OF SUSPENSION FROM THE PRACTICE OF LAW

¶ 1 On October 10, 2006, the United States District Court for the Northern Mariana Islands suspended Joseph Aldan Arriola (“Arriola”) from practicing law in the district court for a period of six months beginning September 20, 2006. The district court found that Arriola: (1) failed to appear before a bankruptcy court hearing; (2) on two occasions paid a filing fee with checks, which were subsequently returned for insufficient funds; (3) failed to appear at a meeting with creditors; (4) withdrew as counsel on short notice before a trial; (5) appeared in court for trial without an interpreter for his client; and (6) failed to appear and argue in opposition to a motion for summary judgment.

¶ 2 On February 23, 2007, the Northern Mariana Islands Bar Association (“bar association”), which monitors, investigates, and prosecutes attorney misconduct in the Commonwealth, filed a disciplinary complaint. The bar association requested that the Commonwealth Superior Court reciprocate the district court’s order suspending Arriola from the practice of law under Rule 14 of the Commonwealth Disciplinary Rules (“Rule”). Arriola challenged the authority of the Superior Court to reciprocate the district

court's order and requested a hearing pursuant to Rule 9(b). Arriola later withdrew his request for a hearing and consented to suspension in the Superior Court.

¶ 3 On May 9, 2007, the Superior Court issued an order suspending Arriola from practicing law in the Superior Court for a period of six months pursuant to Rule 14. Arriola did not file an appeal of the Superior Court's order within thirty days as provided in Rule 9(j). Under Rule 15(c), Arriola's suspension in the Superior Court begins June 9, 2007. With the broad power granted to us through the Rules, and good cause appearing, IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that:

- (1) Arriola is suspended from the practice of law in the Commonwealth courts pursuant to the May 9, 2007, suspension order for a period of six months;
- (2) Arriola follow all requirements of Rule 15 by:
 - (a) Notifying by registered mail, return receipt requested, all clients being represented in pending matters regarding his inability to act as an attorney after the effective date due to suspension, and shall advise his clients to seek legal assistance elsewhere;
 - (b) Filing in the Superior Court a motion for leave to withdraw as counsel in the event any client does not obtain subsequent counsel before the effective date of suspension;
 - (c) Notifying all other state, territorial, federal, and administrative jurisdictions to which he is admitted to practice of the disciplinary action;
 - (d) Maintaining records of the various steps he took under the Rules so that upon any subsequent proceedings instituted by or against him,

proof of compliance with the Rules and with the suspension order will be available — proof of compliance with these rules shall be a condition precedent to any petition for reinstatement;

- (3) Arriola file in the Supreme Court and Superior Court, an affidavit showing that he complied with the provisions of the order within ten days after the effective date of suspension as Rule 15(d) proscribes;
- (4) Arriola follow all other requirements of the Rules; and
- (5) Under Rule 16(a), before Arriola is reinstated to practice law in the Commonwealth courts, he shall sit for and pass the Multi-State Professional Responsibility Examination (MPRE).

¶ 4 Upon passing the MPRE and full compliance with Rule 15, Arriola may file a petition for reinstatement with this Court after his six-month suspension, which ends on December 11, 2007.

SO ORDERED this 11th day of JUNE, 2007.

/s/
MIGUEL S. DEMAPAN
Chief Justice

/s/
ALEXANDRO C. CASTRO
Associate Justice

/s/
JOHN A. MANGLONA
Associate Justice