STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

97-11

November 24, 1997

PRESS RELEASE

On June 11, 1997, Ethics Commission Staff Attorney Catherine Wassel-Nasto filed a complaint against Ms. Rae C. Thiesfield (Docket No. 97-11) alleging repeated violations of the post-state employment provisions of the Code of Ethics for Public Officials. Ms. Thiesfield is an attorney for Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C., and a former employee of the Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities. By a unanimous vote of 6-0 on November 7, 1997, the State Ethics Commission found probable cause to believe that in twenty-five instances Attorney Thiesfield represented six clients for pay before her former agency in violation of the provisions of Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-84b(b). A copy of these findings are attached.

On November 24, 1997, the State Ethics Commission and the Respondent Rae C. Thiesfield settled this matter by entering into a Stipulation and Order. Under the terms of the settlement, the Respondent agreed to pay a civil penalty in the amount of $6,000. A copy of the agreement is attached.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CALL:

Catherine Wassel-Nasto, Esq.
State Ethics Commission
566-4472

Thsfprss

Phone: (860) 566-4472 Fax: (860) 566-3806
20 Trinity Street • Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1660
An Equal Opportunity Employer

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

DOCKET NUMBER 97-11	)	STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
IN THE MATTER OF A	)	20 TRINITY STREET
COMPLAINT AGAINST	)	HARTFORD, CT 06106
RAE THIESFIELD	)	NOVEMBER 24, 1997

STIPULATION AND ORDER

1. The Ethics Commission finds that the Respondent violated the Code of Ethics for Public Officials ("Code"), Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-84b(b), as alleged in its probable cause findings made on November 7, 1997 and contained in its Notice of Termination of Preliminary Investigation and Results Thereof dated November 21, 1997.

2. The Commission further finds that the Respondent did not intend to violate the Code of Ethics by her actions, but rather violated the Code as a result of failing to determine her responsibilities under the Code during and upon termination of her State service.

3. The Commission also finds that the law firm of Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, for which the Respondent worked upon termination of State service, was knowledgeable about the provisions of the Code of Ethics for Public Officials, and had represented a client charged with violations of Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-84b(d) in 1995.

4. The Respondent does not admit the allegations of the Complaint, but does not choose to contest the Commission's findings by pursuing costly litigation, and therefore agrees to settle the matter as set forth below.

5. The Respondent waives any rights she may have under Conn. Gen. Stat. §§1-80, 1-82, 1-82a and 1-87, including the right to further hearing or appeal in this case and agrees with the Commission to an informal disposition of this matter as authorized by Conn. Gen. Stat. §4-177(c).

WHEREFORE, the State Ethics Commission enters, and Ms. Rae Thiesfield agrees to, these orders: In lieu of any other action it is authorized to take with respect to this matter, the Commission orders the Respondent to (1) remit a civil penalty of $6,000 payable in $1,000 monthly installments, the first installment to be made within thirty days; and (2) henceforth comply with the post-state employment requirements of the Code of Ethics for

Public Officials. Nothing in this order shall be construed as precluding the Respondent from seeking reimbursement of the civil penalty from the law firm of Updike, Kelly & Spellacy.

Respondent — Dated 11/24/97

Chairperson
State Ethics Commission — Dated 11/24/97

Thsfstp4

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

DOCKET NUMBER 97-11	)	STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
IN THE MATTER OF A	)	20 TRINITY STREET
COMPLAINT AGAINST	)	HARTFORD, CT 06106
RAE THIESFIELD	)	NOVEMBER 21, 1997

NOTICE OF TERMINATION OF PRELIMINARY INVESTIGATION AND RESULTS THEREOF

Pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-82a, the State Ethics Commission declares that on November 7, 1997 it terminated the preliminary investigation conducted with regard to this matter. As the result of this investigation the Commission makes the following findings by a unanimous vote of 6-0:

1. Finding: The Commission finds probable cause to believe that in twenty-five instances the Respondent represented clients for pay before her former agency in violation of the provisions of §1-84b(b).

Reasons: The Commission rejects the Respondent's claim that the state does not have a substantial interest in the administration of discrimination claims between private parties before the State agency statutorily charged with the investigation of discrimination and civil liberties violations in Connecticut. The Commission also rejects the Respondent's argument that the revolving door restrictions contained in Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-84b(b) apply only to individuals who were engaged in the practice of law on behalf of their former employing agencies.

2. Finding: The Commission finds no probable cause to believe that the Respondent violated Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-84b(b) on the one occasion the Respondent contacted her former agency in order to purchase an agency forms manual.

Reason: A former employee's request to his or her former agency for purely generic information (such as regulations or forms), without identifying the former employee's new employer or client, does not constitute a prohibited representation within the meaning of Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-84b(b).

By Order of the Commission,

Cindy Cannata

DATED 11/21/97 — Cindy Cannata, Clerk of the Commission — thsfpbcs

Phone: (860) 566-4472 Fax: (860) 566-3806
20 Trinity Street · Hartford, Connecticut 06106-1660

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

CONFIDENTIAL

DOCKET NUMBER 97-11	)	STATE ETHICS COMMISSION
IN THE MATTER OF A	)	20 TRINITY STREET
COMPLAINT AGAINST	)	HARTFORD, CT 06106
RAE THIESFIELD	)	JUNE 11, 1997

COMPLAINT

It is hereby alleged that:

1. Ms. Rae Thiesfield (hereinafter the "Respondent") held the position of staff attorney for the Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities ("CHRO") from on or about May 13, 1994 to October 17, 1996.

2. As CHRO staff attorney, the Respondent was subject to the requirements of the Code of Ethics for Public Officials, Chapter 10, Part I, Connecticut General Statutes, including the post-state employment rules contained in Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-84b.

2. After the Respondent's termination from state service, she began employment as an attorney with the law firm of Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C. in October, 1996.

3. Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-84b(b) states that no former executive branch public official or state employee shall, for one year after leaving state service, represent anyone, other than the state, for compensation before the agency or office in which he served at the time of his termination of service, concerning any matter in which the state has a substantial interest.

4. In her capacity as an attorney for Updike, Kelly & Spellacy, P.C., the Respondent has represented clients before the CHRO prior to the expiration of the one year period after she left state service.

5. The Respondent's representation as identified in paragraph 4, above, includes the transmission of client complaints to the CHRO, and participation in CHRO settlement negotiations.

6. The state has a substantial interest in the filing, hearing and disposition of discrimination claims by and against its residents.

7. The Respondent's participation in settlement negotiations involving the CHRO less than one year after the termination of her state service constitutes representation barred by Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-84b(b).

8. Each submission of letters or complaints to the CHRO containing the name of the Respondent, Rae Thiesfield, constitutes a separate violation of Conn. Gen. Stat. §1-84b(b).

C Nasto

Catherine Nasto
Ethics Commission Attorney

6/11/97
Date

Thsfcomp