

DECLARATION OF PETITIONER CHARLES DODGSON

I, Charles Dodgson, declare that the following is true and correct:

1. I am the Petitioner in the above entitled action (and Respondent in the underlying State Bar Court action). I have reviewed the charges against me contained in the Notice of Disciplinary Charges filed in State Bar Court, the documents leading to the entry of the State Bar Court's October 16, 2015 Order Entering Default and Order Enrolling Inactive (Rule 5.80 – Failure to File Timely Response), and the State Bar Court's October 17, 2015 Decision and Order of Involuntary Inactive Enrollment.

2. I provide the following testimony in support of my petition to vacate the default entered against me in State Bar Court and permit me to respond to the Notice of Disciplinary Charges on the merits.

3. The following testimony is intended to provide background to the court as to the attorney I have been throughout my career and the circumstances which led me to be before the State Bar Court and unable to respond to the charges against me

4. Put simply, I spent my career defending those most in need, but when I found myself to be the one in need, I could not help myself. I was faced with an assault of the most personal nature, but I was unable to seek the sort of help that I would advise any victim of domestic violence to seek. As a result, I withdrew from my life and my work, and I was unable to function as a contributing

member of society or the profession. Today, in my recovery, I seek this Court's permission to belatedly answer the State Bar's charges on the merits.

My Legal Career

5. I was admitted to the State Bar of California in 1972. I devoted my career to working for indigent clients and victims of domestic violence through employment and volunteer work at the Bakerstown Shelter for Domestic Violence Victims, the Legal Aid Society of Pomodoro County, and the Center for Abused Women of Pescadero County.

6. I stepped onto a new path of my career in March 2013 when I attempted to work for myself as a solo lawyer. Despite my relatively narrow background, I did not focus my practice well. The need for income led me to take all cases that came to me. I stretched myself into areas of substantive law that were unfamiliar to me.

My Personal Struggles

7. At the same time I was struggling to get a solo law practice going, I was involved in an incident where I attempted to defend a friend in need. It led to a physical assault that I did not report to police or any friends or family. Instead, I withdrew into myself and away from my support network. I also stopped working effectively.

8. Friends stages what can best be described as an intervention several months later. Three people who know me very well cornered me and sat down

with me and insisted I see a counselor. In January 2016 I had my first session. I was diagnosed with depression and post-traumatic stress disorder.

9. The diagnoses and resulting treatment were extremely difficult for me, but ultimately through the path to the recovery of my mental health, I see that certain actions I took in my work (or failed to take, as the case may be), were the direct result of my mental infirmities.

10. I am now being treated for my depression and PTSD, am taking medications for physical health problems which I had neglected, and have a network of support in place.

Failure to Respond to the State Bar and State Bar Court

11. The State Bar letters of investigation of these matters came in the middle of my deep personal struggles, and I was unable to respond to them.

12. The Notice of Disciplinary Charges was filed December 18, 2014. I admit that I did see it in the mail, but I was totally without the capacity to process the information or respond appropriately.

13. I do not recall seeing service copies of subsequent filings by the State Bar, but given my state in the months of late 2016 and early 2017, I cannot swear that they were not received.

14. At this point in time, I am prepared to address the charges that have been made, make appropriate redress and make my emotional health and wellbeing a

priority as I now realize I cannot function professionally without having these issues being addressed on a daily basis.

I declare under the penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Date: April 17, 2016

By: _____
Charles Dodgson