

**BEFORE THE MINNESOTA  
BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY**

In the Matter of the License of  
William J. Dickson, Ph.D., L.P.  
License No. LP2219

**STIPULATION AND  
CONSENT ORDER**

IT IS HEREBY STIPULATED AND AGREED by William J. Dickson, Ph.D., L.P. (Licensee), and the Minnesota Board of Psychology (Board) as follows:

1. During all times herein, Licensee has been and now is subject to the jurisdiction of the Board from which he holds a license to practice psychology in the State of Minnesota.

**FACTS**

2. For the purpose of this stipulation, the Board may consider the following facts as true:

a. Licensee failed to protect the welfare of a supervisee or accord the supervisee the rights of a client by engaging in a personal, emotional, and sexual relationship with her, failed to cooperate with a Board investigation, and engaged in unprofessional conduct as described below:

1) Licensee is the clinical director of the [Redacted] State University Counseling Center. Licensee has served in this capacity for approximately the past six years. The center employs two full-time professional counselors, two yearly graduate interns, and supplemental staff, including a part-time psychology professor and a master's-level part-time counselor. Licensee's responsibilities include supervising the graduate interns.

2) In August 1999, supervisee #1 was hired by the center as a temporary replacement for a center employee on leave. Sometime during the fall or winter of 1999, Licensee and supervisee #1 entered into a personal and sexual relationship.

3) In January 2000, supervisee #1 submitted an application for admission to Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP) with the Board. One

of the requirements for admission for the EPPP for a master's degree is 600 hours of supervised practical field or laboratory experience in psychology related to the program of the applicant. In the section of the application entitled "Practical Field or Laboratory Experience," supervisee #1 identified her employment with the [Redacted] State University Counseling Center as meeting that requirement. Supervisee #1 further identified her site supervisor as Licensee. In the section of the application entitled "Supervisor Qualifications," supervisee #1 identified Licensee as her supervisor.

4) Licensee wrote a letter to the Board, dated January 3, 2000, recommending supervisee #1 for sitting for the EPPP. In this letter, Licensee stated he was supervisee #1's "clinical supervisor." During a disciplinary conference with a Complaint Resolution Committee (Committee) of the Board on August 10, 2001, Licensee admitted he did not provide appropriate supervision to supervisee #1 for purposes of licensure. Licensee told the Committee he believed that he and other professionals had provided sufficient collective supervision to supervisee #1 to meet the requirements of the Psychology Practice Act.

5) In March 2000, the Board received information that Licensee had entered into an inappropriate relationship with supervisee #1. Pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 214.10, subd. 8(a), the Board referred the matter to the Office of the Attorney General for investigation.

6) On May 23, 2000, the investigator interviewed supervisee #1. Supervisee #1 denied ever having any form of sexual contact or affair with Licensee and denied that the relationship was anything other than professional.

7) On May 25, 2000, the investigator interviewed Licensee. Licensee denied ever having any form of sexual contact or affair with supervisee #1 and denied that the relationship was anything other than professional.

8) No other person interviewed by the investigator was able to substantiate the allegations of an improper relationship between Licensee and supervisee #1.

9) Based on the results of the investigation by the Office of the Attorney General, including Licensee's and supervisee #1's representations that there was

nothing other than a professional relationship between them, the Board ended its investigation and closed its file on this complaint on July 21, 2000.

b. On October 27, 2000, the Board received a complaint that supervisee #1 had told a third person that she had engaged in a sexual affair with Licensee and further told the third person that she and Licensee had lied to the investigator from the Office of the Attorney General about the affair.

1) On February 6, 2001, an investigator from the Attorney General's Office wrote to Licensee, requesting an interview regarding the new allegations. On February 14, 2001, the investigator received a telephone call from Licensee's attorney, advising that Licensee wanted to submit a written statement regarding the allegations.

2) On March 20, 2001, Licensee's attorney provided a letter from Licensee, dated March 20, 2001, regarding this situation. The letter contained the following information:

a) Licensee admitted to engaging in a sexual relationship with supervisee #1.

b) Licensee admitted to misrepresenting the nature of his relationship with supervisee #1 to the investigator but that he was following supervisee #1's lead in this regard and that he did so in an effort to protect her and to avoid personal problems that would ensue for him if the relationship was made public.

c) Licensee stated that, in his mind, supervisee #1 was not a supervisee, she was a "junior colleague" with whom he shared many apparent interests and life issues.

c. During his disciplinary conference on August 10, 2001, Licensee told the Committee that the nature of the structure of the counseling center also may have contributed to the lack of clarity in the role of the clinical director. Licensee asserts he currently is working with university administrators to clarify the roles of professionals within the counseling center to eliminate confusion.

d. Licensee is receiving therapy to assess the issues that contributed to his inappropriate relationship with supervisee #1.

### **REGULATIONS**

3. The Board views Licensee's practices as described in paragraph 2 above to be in violation of statutes and rules enforced by the Board. Licensee agrees that the conduct cited above constitutes a violation of Minn. Stat. § 148.98 (2000) (code of conduct); Minn. Stat. § 148.941, subd. 2(a)(1) (2000) (violation of statute or rule Board is empowered to enforce); Minn. Stat. § 148.941, subd. 2(a)(2) (2000) (fraudulent, deceptive, or dishonest conduct adversely affecting ability or fitness to practice psychology); Minn. Stat. § 148.941, subd. 2(a)(3) (2000) and Minn. R. 7200.5700 (unprofessional conduct); Minn. Stat. § 148.941, subd. 2(a)(8) (2000) (failure to cooperate with Board investigation); Minn. R. 7200.4900, subp. 8 (1999) (engaging in a sexual relationship with a supervisee); Minn. R. 7200.5400 (failure to protect welfare of supervisees or to accord them client rights); and Minn. R. 7200.5600 (engaging in conduct likely to deceive or defraud the public or the Board). Licensee further agrees that the conduct and violations constitute a reasonable basis in law and fact to justify the disciplinary action provided for in the order.

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION**

4. Upon this stipulation and without any further notice or proceedings, Licensee is **REPRIMANDED** for engaging in a sexual relationship with a supervisee, misrepresenting the nature of his relationship with his supervisee, and failing to cooperate with a Board investigation by failing to fully and truthfully respond when questioned in connection with the investigation. The Board hereby **SUSPENDS** Licensee's license to practice psychology in Minnesota. The suspension is **STAYED** so long as Licensee complies with the following **CONDITIONS** and requirements:

a. ***Supervision of Licensee by Board-Approved Psychologist.*** Licensee shall practice psychology only under the supervision of a supervising psychologist approved in advance by the Committee from a list of at least three names Licensee has submitted to the

Committee. Licensee shall cause each psychologist listed to submit a current vitae to the Board for the Committee's review prior to its approval of a supervisor. The Committee reserves the right to reject all names submitted by Licensee. If the Committee rejects any names submitted, the Committee may require that Licensee submit additional names as described above, or the Committee may provide Licensee with the name of a supervisor. Licensee shall have no previous personal or professional relationship with the supervisor, except that with the Committee's approval, his supervisor may be the same person who serves as his boundaries course instructor as described in paragraph 4.e. below. Licensee shall obtain a supervising psychologist within one month of the date this Stipulation and Consent Order is adopted by the Board and shall meet with the supervising psychologist no less than one hour per month for a minimum of one year. Licensee must engage in the practice of psychology between meetings with the supervising psychologist in order for each meeting to count toward Licensee's compliance with this provision. The purpose of the meetings is to address the nature of the supervisor/supervisee relationship, including the ways in which personal aspects of relationships impact the boundaries and nature of the supervisor/supervisee relationship.

b. ***Supervisor's Reports.*** The supervising psychologist shall provide a report to the Committee every three months and at the time Licensee petitions to have the conditions removed from his license. The first report is due three months from the date supervision begins, and all subsequent reports shall be submitted on the first day of the month in which they are due. Each report shall provide and/or address:

- 1) In the first report, evidence Licensee's supervisor has received and reviewed a copy of the Stipulation and Consent Order;
- 2) Dates on which supervision took place with Licensee;
- 3) Method by which supervision was conducted;
- 4) A statement that all cases have been reviewed, a description of any problems discovered in the review, and the resolution of the problems;

5) The supervisor's opinion as to Licensee's ability to provide competent services;

6) Any other information the supervisor believes would assist the Board in its ultimate review of this matter; and

7) At the time Licensee petitions for removal of the above-referenced conditions, the supervisor's report shall include an assessment of Licensee's ability to conduct himself in a fit, competent, and ethical manner in the practice of psychology as well as whether Licensee exhibits an acceptable comprehension and knowledge of ethical issues encountered in practice as well as the ability to apply this knowledge.

c. ***Licensee's Own Reports.*** Licensee shall submit a report to the Committee every three months and at the time Licensee petitions to have the conditions removed from his license. The first report is due three months from the date supervision begins, and all subsequent reports shall be submitted by the first day of the month in which they are due. Each report shall provide and/or address:

1) A brief statement of the topics discussed at each supervision meeting;

2) What Licensee has learned from the consultations, including his own statement as to his comprehension and knowledge of ethical issues encountered in practice;

3) At the time Licensee petitions for removal of the conditions on his license, Licensee's reasons for believing he is capable of conducting himself in a fit, competent, and ethical manner in the practice of psychology; and

4) Any other information Licensee believes would assist the Board in its ultimate review of this matter.

d. ***Treating Therapist's Reports.*** Licensee shall comply with the treatment recommendations of his current treating therapist and shall be responsible for the cost of treatment. Within 30 days of the date this Stipulation and Consent Order is adopted by the

Board, Licensee's therapist shall submit a report to the Committee providing and/or addressing the following:

1) A statement that the therapist has received and reviewed a copy of this Stipulation and Consent Order;

2) Identification of a treatment plan devised specifically for Licensee. Any subsequent changes made in the treatment plan shall be identified in later reports;

3) A statement of the involvement between Licensee and the therapist, including dates, number, and frequency of meetings;

4) Licensee's therapeutic progress and compliance with the treatment plan;

5) The therapist's opinion as to Licensee's capacity to understand his professional role and the boundaries of that role and his ability to distinguish between his personal and professional needs, identity, and behavior;

6) The therapist's opinion as to Licensee's ability to practice psychology with reasonable skill and safety;

7) The therapist's opinion as to the need for continuing therapy and/or Licensee's discontinuance of therapy; and

8) Any other information the therapist believes would assist the Board in its ultimate review of this matter.

Should therapy be terminated for any reason prior to the time Licensee petitions the Board for an unconditional license, the therapist shall notify the Committee of the termination and the reasons therefore.

e. **Boundaries Course.** Within 30 days of the date this Stipulation and Consent Order is adopted by the Board, Licensee shall arrange to enroll in an individualized professional boundaries training course. The Committee will provide Licensee with a list of such courses, which have been approved, for the purposes of satisfying this requirement. If the Committee and Licensee concur that there is sufficient reason for Licensee not to enroll in any of

the courses the Committee has listed, Licensee shall, within 30 days of the date this Stipulation and Consent Order is adopted by the Board, submit to the Committee for approval a syllabus that includes goals, objectives, assignments, projects, methods, and frequency of evaluation, etc., for a similar individualized professional boundaries training course. Licensee shall also submit the course instructor's vitae to the Committee for its approval of the instructor. The instructor shall be either a licensed psychologist or have a doctoral degree in psychology. Licensee shall complete the course within twelve (12) months of the date this Stipulation and Consent Order is adopted by the Board. All fees for the course shall be paid by Licensee. Successful completion of the boundaries course shall be determined by the Committee.

f. ***Report on Boundaries Course From Licensee.*** Within 30 days of completing the professional boundaries course referenced above, Licensee shall submit a report to the Committee which provides and addresses:

1) The dates Licensee began and completed the boundaries training course;

2) A brief statement of the topics covered in the professional boundaries training course;

3) A detailed discussion of what Licensee has learned from the boundaries training course, including Licensee's comprehension and knowledge of boundary issues, as well as various ethical issues encountered in practice, and how this course will affect his practice in the future;

4) A detailed discussion of each boundary violation that occurred regarding the circumstances described in the Facts section of this Stipulation and Consent Order, including (a) how Licensee came to violate these boundaries; (b) the manner in which Licensee violated these boundaries; (c) the specific harm to specific individuals that resulted or could have resulted from the boundary violations; and (d) how Licensee now believes the boundary violations could have been averted;

5) A detailed discussion of the specific ways this course will affect Licensee's practice in the future;

6) Licensee's reasons for believing he is capable of conducting himself in a fit, competent, and ethical manner in the practice of psychology; and

7) Any other information Licensee believes would assist the Board in its ultimate review of this matter.

g. **Report on Boundaries Course From Instructor.** Within 60 days of completing the professional boundaries course referenced above, Licensee shall cause to be submitted to the Committee a report from the instructor of the professional boundaries course. This report shall address:

1) The extent of Licensee's participation in the course; and  
2) The instructor's assessment of Licensee's knowledge obtained from the course and opinion as to Licensee's recognition of boundary issues and Licensee's ethical fitness to engage in the practice of psychology.

h. **Professional Responsibility Examination.** Licensee shall take the examination described in Minn. R. 7200.3000, subp. 1.B., within 90 days of the date this Stipulation and Consent Order is adopted by the Board and retake the examination, if necessary, until obtaining a score of 50 out of 60 correct answers.

i. **Civil Penalty.** Licensee shall pay a civil penalty to the Board in the amount of five thousand (\$5,000) dollars for engaging in the conduct and violations described in paragraphs 2 and 3 above. Payment of \$5,000 shall be remitted in full to the Minnesota Board of Psychology at Suite 320, 2829 University Avenue SE, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55414 within one year of the date this Stipulation and Consent Order is adopted by the Board.

j. **Fine for Violation of Order.** If any due date required by this Stipulation and Consent Order is not met, the Committee may fine Licensee \$100 per violation. Licensee shall pay the fine and correct the violation within five days after service on Licensee of a demand for payment and correction. If Licensee fails to do so, the Committee may impose additional

finer not to exceed \$500 per violation. The total of all fines may not exceed \$5,000. Licensee waives the right to seek review of the imposition of these fines under the Administrative Procedure Act, by *writ of certiorari* under Minn. Stat. § 480A.06, by application to the Board, or otherwise. Neither the imposition of fines nor correction of the violation will deprive the Board of the right to impose additional discipline based on the violation.

k. **Costs.** Licensee is responsible for all costs incurred as a result of compliance with this Stipulation and Consent Order.

l. **Applicability to Renewal Requirements.** No condition imposed as a remedy by this Stipulation and Consent Order, including conditions directly related to a restriction, shall be used as a continuing education activity for the purpose of renewal of Licensee's license to practice psychology, unless it is specifically stated in this Stipulation and Consent Order that the condition may be used for this purpose.

5. **Reports.** All reports shall cover the entire reporting period and provide the bases upon which conclusions were drawn.

6. **Releases.** Licensee shall execute releases allowing his supervisor, boundaries course instructor, and treating therapist to communicate with each other regarding matters related to this Stipulation and Consent Order. Licensee shall also execute releases allowing the Board to exchange data with or provide data related to this Stipulation and Consent Order to his supervisor, therapist, and any other professional Licensee contacts in order to comply with this Order.

7. **Petition for Unconditional License.** Upon completion of all terms, provisions, and conditions of this Stipulation and Consent Order, Licensee may petition the Board to remove the restrictions or conditions on his license. The Board may, at any regularly scheduled meeting at which Licensee has made a timely petition, take any of the following actions:

- a. Remove the conditions attached to the license of Licensee;
- b. Amend the conditions attached to the license of Licensee;

c. Continue the conditions attached to the license of Licensee upon his failure to meet his burden of proof; or

d. Impose additional conditions or restrictions on the license of Licensee.

### **CONSEQUENCES FOR NONCOMPLIANCE OR ADDITIONAL VIOLATIONS**

8. It is Licensee's responsibility to ensure all payments, reports, and documentation required to be filed with the Board pursuant to this Stipulation and Consent Order are timely filed by those preparing the report or documentation. Failure to file payments, reports, and documentation on or before their due date is a violation of this Stipulation and Consent Order.

#### **Noncompliance With Requirements for Stay of Suspension**

9. If the Committee has probable cause to believe Licensee has engaged in sexual misconduct or has engaged in deceptive or dishonest conduct, in violation of applicable statutes and rules enforced by the Board, the Committee may remove the stay of suspension pursuant to the procedures outlined in paragraph 10 below, with the following additions and exceptions:

a. The removal of the stay of suspension shall take effect upon service of an Order of Removal of Stay of Suspension (Order of Removal). Licensee agrees that the Committee is authorized to issue an Order of Removal, which shall remain in effect and shall have the full force and effect of an order of the Board until the Board makes a final determination pursuant to the procedures outlined in paragraph 10 below. The Order of Removal shall confirm the Committee has probable cause to believe Licensee has violated one or more of the requirements for staying the suspension of Licensee's license. Licensee further agrees an Order of Removal issued pursuant to this paragraph shall be deemed a public document under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act. Licensee waives any right to a hearing before removal of the stay of suspension.

b. The Committee shall schedule the hearing pursuant to paragraph 10 below to be held within 30 days of the date of service of the Order of Removal.

### **Noncompliance With Stipulation and Consent Order**

10. If Licensee shall fail, neglect, or refuse to fully comply with each of the terms, provisions, and conditions herein, the Committee shall schedule a hearing before the Board. The Committee shall mail Licensee a notice of the violation alleged by the Committee and of the time and place of the hearing. Licensee shall submit a response to the allegations at least three days prior to the hearing. If Licensee does not submit a timely response to the Board, the allegations may be deemed admitted.

At the hearing before the Board, the Committee and Licensee may submit affidavits made on personal knowledge and argument based on the record in support of their positions. The evidentiary record before the Board shall be limited to such affidavits and this Stipulation and Consent Order. Licensee waives a hearing before an administrative law judge and waives discovery, cross-examination of adverse witnesses, and other procedures governing administrative hearings or civil trials.

At the hearing, the Board will determine whether to impose additional disciplinary action, including additional conditions or limitations on Licensee's practice, or suspension or revocation of Licensee's license.

11. This stipulation shall not in any way limit or affect the authority of the Board to temporarily suspend Licensee's license under Minn. Stat. § 148.941, subd. 3, or to initiate contested case proceedings against Licensee on the basis of any act, conduct, or omission of Licensee justifying disciplinary action occurring before or after the date of this Stipulation and Consent Order which is not related to the facts, circumstances or requirements referenced herein.

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

12. In the event Licensee resides or practices outside the State of Minnesota, Licensee shall promptly notify the Board in writing of the location of his residence and all work sites. Practice outside of Minnesota will not be credited toward any period of Licensee's suspended, limited, conditioned or restricted license in Minnesota unless Licensee demonstrates to the

satisfaction of the Board that the practice in another jurisdiction conforms completely with Licensee's Minnesota licensure requirements to practice psychology.

13. In the event the Board at its discretion does not approve this settlement or a lesser remedy than indicated in this settlement, then, and in that event, this stipulation is withdrawn and shall be of no evidentiary value and shall not be relied upon nor introduced by either party to this stipulation, except that Licensee agrees that should the Board reject this stipulation and this case proceeds to hearing, Licensee will assert no claim that the Board was prejudiced by its review and discussion of this stipulation or of any records relating to this matter.

14. Any appropriate court may, upon application of the Board, enter its decree enforcing the order of the Board.

15. Licensee has been advised by Board representatives that he may choose to be represented by legal counsel in this matter. Licensee has been represented by Kristine W. Cannon.

16. Licensee waives all formal hearings on this matter and all other procedures before the Board to which Licensee may be entitled under the Minnesota or United States constitutions, statutes, or rules and agrees that the order to be entered pursuant to the stipulation shall be the final order herein.

17. Licensee hereby knowingly and voluntarily waives any and all claims against the Board, the Minnesota Attorney General, the State of Minnesota and their agents, employees and representatives which may otherwise be available to Licensee under the Americans With Disabilities Act or the Minnesota Human Rights Act relative to the action taken or authorized against Licensee's license to practice psychology under this stipulation.

18. Licensee hereby acknowledges that he has read, understands, and agrees to this stipulation and has freely and voluntarily signed the stipulation without threat or promise by the Board or any of its members, employees, or agents. When signing the stipulation, Licensee acknowledges he is fully aware the stipulation shall be approved by the Board. The Board may either approve the Stipulation and Consent Order as proposed, approve the Stipulation and

Consent Order subject to specified change, or reject it. If the changes are acceptable to Licensee, the stipulation will then take effect and the order as modified will be issued. If the changes are unacceptable to Licensee or the Board rejects the stipulation, it will be of no effect except as specified herein.

**DATA PRACTICES NOTICES**

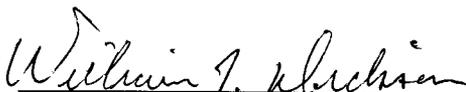
19. This Stipulation and Consent Order constitutes a disciplinary action against Licensee.

20. This Stipulation and Consent Order is a public document and will be sent to all appropriate data banks.

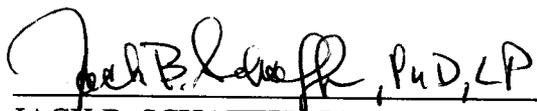
21. This stipulation contains the entire agreement between the parties there being no other agreement of any kind, verbal or otherwise, which varies this stipulation.

BOARD OF PSYCHOLOGY

COMPLAINT RESOLUTION  
COMMITTEE

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
WILLIAM J. DICKSON, Ph.D., L.P.  
Licensee

Dated: 11/28/, 2001

  
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JACK B. SCHAFFER, Ph.D., L.P.

Dated: 12/14, 2001

  
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NICHOLAS J. RUIZ, Ph.D., L.P.

Dated: 12/14/01, 2001

  
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MARCIA FARINACCI

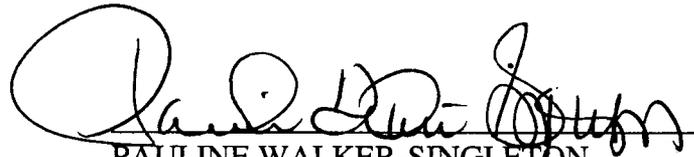
Dated: 12-14, 2001

**ORDER**

Upon consideration of this stipulation and all the files, records, and proceedings herein,  
IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that Licensee is REPRIMANDED, that his license is placed  
in a STAYED SUSPENSION/CONDITIONAL status, and that all other terms of this stipulation  
are adopted and implemented by the Board this 14th day of Dec., 2001.

MINNESOTA BOARD

OF PSYCHOLOGY



PAULINE WALKER-SINGLETON

Executive Director

AG: 502830,v. 01