

**THE DISCIPLINARY AND ETHICS COMMISSION
CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER BOARD OF STANDARDS, INC.**

In the Matter of

Lee M. Generous,

Respondent.

CFP Board Case No. 2023-65494

September 19, 2025

ORDER

Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc. (“CFP Board”) granted Respondent the right to use the CFP®, CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER®,  and  certification marks (“CFP marks”) on January 28, 2014, and he has been certified since that date. (DEC Book at 14.)¹

I. PROCEDURAL HISTORY

On September 23, 2024, Enforcement Counsel filed a Complaint with CFP Board’s Disciplinary and Ethics Commission (“Commission”) alleging grounds to sanction Respondent for violations of Standards A.8.a and D.2.a of the *Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct* (“*Code and Standards*.”) and Rules 4.3 and 5.1 of the *Rules of Conduct*. (*Id.* at 3-10.) The Complaint cites an October 16, 2023 letter of Acceptance Waiver and Consent (“AWC”) Respondent entered with the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, Inc. (“FINRA”) concerning Respondent’s practice of signing others’ names on documents with their permission—a practice referred to as “accommodation forgery.” (*Id.* at 77.)

On December 2, 2024, Respondent filed an Answer to the Complaint in which he acknowledges having entered into the AWC. Respondent admits that he affixed electronic signatures of some of his clients and the electronic signature of his supervisor to various documents, while denying or offering explanations in response to other allegations. (*Id.* at 440-51.)

On June 26, 2025, a hearing panel formed under Article 10.6 of the *Procedural Rules* convened in person to hear testimony, and to review and consider documents, information, and argument relevant to the Complaint. (Transcript of Hearing of Lee M. Generous, CFP®, June 26, 2025 (“Tr.”) at 1.) Enforcement Counsel appeared for CFP Board; DEC Counsel appeared for the Commission and for the hearing panel; Respondent appeared and was represented by counsel.

¹ The DEC Book and any other exhibits to this Order will not be published under Article 17.7 of the *Procedural Rules*.

II. FINDINGS OF FACT

A. Respondent's Professional Background

Respondent has passed the (a) Series 7 – General Securities Representative Examination (2010); (b) Series 63 – Uniform Securities Agent State Law Examination (2010); (c) Series 65 – Uniform Investment Advisor Law Examination (2013); (d) SIE – Securities Industry Essentials Examination (2018); and Series 7 TO – General Securities Representative Examination (2022). (*Id.* at 21.)

In January 2015, Respondent joined a large brokerage firm as a wealth advisor. The firm terminated him in October 2021 for “electronically sign[ing] account documents on behalf of customers, with customers’ authorization but in violation of Firm document signature policy during the COVID pandemic.” (DEC Book at 62.)

Respondent is currently the CEO and Chief Compliance Officer of his own wealth management firm, which employs two advisors and two part-time employees (Tr. at 154.)

B. Respondent's FINRA AWC

On October 16, 2023, Respondent entered an AWC with FINRA in which he accepted and consented to the following findings:

From May 2020 through March 2021, [Respondent] electronically signed a total of 56 documents for 25 customers, some of whom were seniors, with the customers’ permission. None of the customers complained. The documents included required records of the firm, including new account applications, account transfer forms, and opt-in forms for electronic prospectuses. [Respondent] also electronically signed the name of a fellow registered representative, who was the primary registered representative on customer accounts that they jointly serviced, on more than 100 documents with the registered representative’s permission. Additionally, [Respondent] falsely attested in an August 2020 compliance questionnaire that he had not signed or affixed another person’s signature on a document. By falsifying customer and registered representative signatures, [Respondent] violated FINRA Rule 2010. In addition, by causing [his firm] to maintain inaccurate books and records, [Respondent] violated FINRA Rules 4511 and 2010.

Respondent consented to the imposition of a three-month suspension from associating with any FINRA member and a \$5,000 fine. (*Id.* at 75-81.)

C. Other Evidence Presented

Respondent testified at the hearing that during the COVID pandemic, some clients did not want to handle paper documents for fear of contracting the virus, so he offered to complete and sign their

documentation electronically. (DEC Book at 239-240.) He says he also electronically signed on behalf of clients with urgent requests who did not have access to email, or who simply asked him “to take care of it.” (Tr. at 138-139.) Respondent’s accommodation forgeries were revealed in the course of a 2021 internal audit conducted by his then firm. (Tr. 26-28.)

Enforcement Counsel called two other witnesses to testify—Respondent’s supervisor at the time, referred to in the AWC as the “fellow registered representative;” and another advisor who worked for the supervisor. Both were CFP® professionals at one time. (Tr. at 30-31; 60.) The supervisor testified that he gave Respondent and the other advisor authorization to sign his (the supervisor’s) signature electronically², but he did not authorize Respondent to sign documents on behalf of clients. (Tr. at 28.)

The other advisor who had been given authorization to electronically sign on behalf of the supervisor confirmed that the firm’s policies did not allow advisors to sign documents on behalf of clients, whether on paper or electronically. (Tr. at 70-72.)

Both FINRA and CFP Board investigated the supervisor and the other advisor in connection with these events. The other advisor received letters of caution from both FINRA and CFP Board for signing on behalf of his supervisor. (Tr. at 73.) The supervisor entered an AWC with FINRA under which he was suspended for two months and fined \$7,500. CFP Board issued an interim suspension against the supervisor in 2024. (Tr. at 30-31.)

III. DISCUSSION

The Commission has found grounds for sanction against Respondent under the authority granted to it in Article 12 of the *Procedural Rules*.

Respondent was a CFP® professional at all times relevant to these violations.

First Grounds for Sanction

Standard A.8.a of the *Code and Standards*, which is applicable to Respondent’s conduct that occurred on or after June 30, 2020, states that a CFP® professional must comply with the laws, rules and regulations governing Professional Services.

Article 7.2 of the *Procedural Rules* provides that a record from a (a) federal, state, local, or foreign governmental agency, (b) self-regulatory organization, (c) other regulatory authority, or (d) court of civil jurisdiction imposing discipline upon Respondent (“Professional Discipline”) is conclusive proof of the existence of such Professional Discipline and the facts and violations that serve as the basis for such Professional Discipline. The fact that Respondent has not admitted or denied the findings contained in the record does not affect the conclusiveness of the proof. Professional

² The record reflects that Respondent’s accommodation forgeries of his supervisor’s signature occurred throughout his tenure at the firm, beginning in 2016. (DEC Book at 153, 161-165, 169-170, 340-343.)

Discipline includes a censure, injunction, undertaking, order to cease and desist, fine, suspension, bar, or revocation, and the surrender of a professional license or certification in response to a regulatory action or regulatory investigation. A record of Professional Discipline includes a settlement agreement, order, consent order, and letter of Acceptance, Waiver, and Consent.

FINRA is a self-regulatory organization. The AWC is a record of Professional Discipline by FINRA, and Respondent is the subject of that record. Therefore, the AWC conclusively establishes the existence of such Professional Discipline for purposes of this disciplinary proceeding and is conclusive proof of the facts and violations that serve as the basis for such Professional Discipline of Respondent.

The AWC conclusively proves that Respondent failed to comply with FINRA Rules 2010 and 4511.

Therefore, there are grounds to sanction Respondent for a violation of Standard A.8.a of the *Code and Standards*.

Second Grounds For Sanction

Rule 4.3 of the *Rules of Conduct*, which is applicable to Respondent's conduct that occurred before June 30, 2020, states that a CFP® professional must comply with applicable regulatory requirements governing professional services provided to the client

Under Article 7.2 of the *Procedural Rules*, the AWC conclusively establishes that Respondent failed to comply with FINRA Rules 2010 and 4511, which are regulatory requirements governing professional services provided to the clients.

Therefore, there are grounds to sanction Respondent for a violation of Rule 4.3 of the *Rules of Conduct*.

Third Grounds for Sanction

Standard D.2.a of the *Code and Standards*, which is applicable to Respondent's conduct that occurred on or after June 30, 2020, states that a CFP® professional will be subject to discipline by CFP Board for violating policies and procedures of the CFP® professional's firm that do not conflict with the *Code and Standards*.

Starting in 2016, Respondent electronically signed documents on behalf of his supervisor. Beginning in 2020, in connection with the COVID pandemic, Respondent electronically signed documents on behalf of clients. In all instances, the signatures were authorized. All of these accommodation forgeries were contrary to the policies and procedures of his firm at the time.

Therefore, there are grounds to sanction Respondent for a violation of Standard D.2.a of the *Code and Standards*.

Fourth Grounds for Sanction

Rule 5.1 of the *Standards of Professional Conduct*, which is applicable to Respondent's conduct that occurred before June 30, 2020, states that a certificant who is an employee/agent shall perform professional services with dedication to the lawful objectives of the employer/principal and in accordance with CFP Board's *Code of Ethics*

Starting in 2016, Respondent electronically signed documents on behalf of his supervisor. Beginning in 2020, in connection with the COVID pandemic, Respondent electronically signed documents on behalf of clients. In all instances the signatures were authorized. All of these accommodation forgeries were contrary to the policies and procedures of his firm at the time. Therefore, Respondent failed to perform professional services with dedication to the firm's lawful objectives, and there are grounds to sanction Respondent for a violation of Rule 5.1.

IV. THE COMMISSION'S DECISION

CFP Board has issued non-binding *Sanction Guidelines* intended to serve as guidance for determining appropriate sanctions. The Commission considered the following categories of conduct (and recommended sanction) from the *Sanction Guidelines*:

Conduct 2: Books and Records Violation (Private Censure)

Conduct 12- Employer Policies Violation (Private Censure)

Conduct 30- Securities Law Violation (Public Censure)

Conduct 34- Professional Discipline as Defined in Article 7.2 (suspension for at least One Year and One day)

The Commission has also considered whether there are any material aggravating or mitigating factors relevant to Respondent's sanction. This included a review of aggravating or mitigating factors offered by the parties.

The Commission cites the following factors as mitigating:

1. Respondent promptly reported his termination to CFP Board.
2. There was no dishonest motive behind Respondent's actions.
3. Respondent has no prior record of discipline, client complaints or other regulatory investigations, and there is no evidence of customer harm here.
4. Respondent cooperated fully with the investigations undertaken by FINRA and CFP Board.

5. Respondent testified credibly that he has changed his practices and that under no circumstances does he affix another's electronic signature.
6. Respondent's accommodation forgeries of client signatures were, at least in part, motivated by logistical challenges and health concerns posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Commission cites the following factors as aggravating:

1. Respondent engaged in a years-long course of misconduct.
2. Respondent was terminated by his firm.

The Commission has consulted Case Histories (referred to as "CHs" or "ACHs"), including CHs identified by the parties, to determine if any contain non-binding precedent that may be persuasive to the Commission. The Commission finds CH 45776, issued in November 2024, and CH 44328, issued in September 2023, to be relevant.

In CH 45776, the respondent was issued a temporary bar for one year and one day for allowing his business partner to forge the respondent's signature and client signatures on account documents over a year-long period during COVID. In that matter, the respondent was a seasoned financial professional with three decades of experience and a supervisory license, and some of his testimony was found to be not credible. In CH 44328, the respondent was issued a four-month suspension, conforming to his FINRA suspension, for a single instance of forging client signatures on account transfer forms. In that matter the respondent had been cautioned by CFP Board for earlier violations of his firm's electronic signature policy.

The Commission determined that the mitigating factors in Respondent's matter and consideration of the length of his FINRA suspension justify a downward departure from the highest sanction of a suspension of at least one year and one day as provided by the *Sanction Guidelines*.

In consideration of the violations found, the aggravating and mitigating factors, and the Case Histories the Commission issues this Order imposing a **Suspension of Nine Months** on Respondent.

Ordered by:

Disciplinary and Ethics Commission
CFP Board