

## California Lawyer Disbarred for Misappropriating \$65,000



*Summary: A Pasadena-based family law attorney was disbarred in January for misappropriating funds.*

This year, a California lawyer was disbarred for misappropriating client money. Even more humiliating for her, attorney Mary Derparseghian was ordered to notify all of her clients that her license was stripped and that they needed to seek counsel elsewhere.

According to *Pasadena Now*, the local family law attorney was accused of taking almost \$65,000 from one client and failing to competently perform for another.

Derparseghian, 41, graduated from Southwestern University School of Law and practiced law in Pasadena since 2003. According to the California Bar, she practiced in areas such as real estate, bankruptcy, family law, litigation, and intellectual property. She appeared to be a sole practitioner at Der Parseghian Law Group, and her firm's Facebook page said it was dedicated to its clients.

"Our reputation clearly demonstrates the dedication and individualized service to the Client is foremost," the Facebook page state. "Aggressive prosecution of litigation is complemented by personal, committed and understanding service to the Client. Each Client receives attentive communication and care. Mobility to the Client offers further convenience for those who may prefer to meet outside of our office or during other than normal business hours."

Derparseghian became ineligible to practice law in California in September of 2016, and she was disbarred on January 19 because of two instances of failing to perform her duties as a lawyer with clients.

First, Derparseghian allegedly failed to prepare and maintain required trust account records. In February 2010, a couple hired her to handle their dispute with their homeowners association because they said they had a leaky roof that was causing mold to form in their condo.

In that case, Derparseghian was supposed to deposit \$5,000 to her client trust account but failed, which was a violation of established procedures, *Pasadena Now* reported. Additionally, she withdrew cash from the trust even though she was required to keep \$60,000 in it at all times.

In the second instance, Derparseghian failed to inform her other client, Paul Merrigan, that he needed to show up at a court trial. She also did not request a trial continuance after his absence, and she herself did not prepare nor appeal at his trial or judgment hearing.

Merrigan and his company Desert Classic Concours D'Elegance were sued by Image Lab Inc. in 2011 for breach of contract. He said that he was unaware that he was supposed to head to court until he read in the local newspaper that he had a \$116,000 judgment to Image Lab due.

Initially, Derparseghian pled guilty to five counts of misconduct and a State Bar Court hearing judge recommended that she receive a two-year suspension. However, that recommendation was appealed by the Office of Chief Trial Counsel.

During the appeal proceeding, a three-judge review panel concluded that Derparseghian's misconduct was intentional and they recommended her disbarment.

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Source: *Pasadena Now*

**What do you think of Ms. Derparseghian? Let us know in the comments below.**

