

FINANCIAL INDUSTRY REGULATORY AUTHORITY

OFFICE OF HEARING OFFICERS

Department of Enforcement,

Complainant,

v.

Bruce R. Geiger (CRD No. 1591606),

Respondent.

DISCIPLINARY PROCEEDING
No. 2011026440401

Hearing Officer – KBW

**ORDER ACCEPTING OFFER OF
SETTLEMENT**

Date: June 24, 2015

INTRODUCTION

Disciplinary Proceeding No. 2011026440401 was filed on December 30, 2014, by the Department of Enforcement of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority (“FINRA”) (“Complainant”). Respondent Bruce R. Geiger submitted an Offer of Settlement (“Offer”) to Complainant dated June 22, 2015. Pursuant to FINRA Rule 9270(e), the Complainant and the National Adjudicatory Council (“NAC”), a Review Subcommittee of the NAC, or the Office of Disciplinary Affairs (“ODA”) have accepted the uncontested Offer. Accordingly, this Order now is issued pursuant to FINRA Rule 9270(e)(3). The findings, conclusions and sanctions set forth in this Order are those stated in the Offer as accepted by the Complainant and approved by the NAC.

Under the terms of the Offer, Respondent has consented, without admitting or denying the allegations of the Complaint (as amended by the Offer), and solely for the purposes of this proceeding and any other proceeding brought by or on behalf of FINRA, or to which FINRA is a party, to the entry of findings and violations consistent with the allegations of the Complaint (as

amended by the Offer), and to the imposition of the sanctions set forth below, and fully understands that this Order will become part of Respondent's permanent disciplinary record and may be considered in any future actions brought by FINRA.

BACKGROUND

From August 19, 1986 through November 30, 2010, Bruce R. Geiger was associated with Thrivent Investment Management, Inc. ("Thrivent" or the "Firm") and a prior predecessor member firm (collectively referenced hereinafter as "Thrivent"). Geiger was registered with FINRA through Thrivent as an Investment Company Products/Variable Contracts Representative ("IR") (Series 6) from June 9, 1987 through December 9, 2010, and as a General Securities Representative ("GSR") (Series 7) from July 14, 2004 through December 9, 2010. While associated with Thrivent, Geiger worked from an office in Visalia, California. From at least April 2006, his home was designated as a branch office of Thrivent. Since December 2010, Geiger has been registered as an IR and as a GSR with another FINRA member firm.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

It has been determined that the Offer be accepted and that findings be made as follows:

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

From October 2005 through October 2010 ("Relevant Period"), registered representatives at Thrivent utilized: (i) an "Annuity/Settlement Option Withdrawal Service Request" form to facilitate customer requests for surrenders, partial withdrawals, full withdrawals and transfers of funds in connection with various annuity contracts or life insurance settlement options; and (ii) a "Values Distribution Request" form to facilitate customer requests for distributions from life insurance contracts.

Although the format of the forms changed during the Relevant Period, all versions required that the customer sign and date the form.

Throughout the Relevant Period, Thrivent's procedures required original and authentic customer signatures. The procedures specifically prohibited employees from signing documents on behalf of customers, even if to do so accommodated a customer's request.

On several occasions, between October 2006 and June 2009, Thrivent issued written directives and guidance, available firm-wide, to remind all of its registered representatives that documents cannot be altered in any manner and that submitting a document with altered information, or submitting a document with a non-authentic signature, violated the firm's procedures and NASD or FINRA rules.

Notwithstanding the procedures and reminders, Geiger altered forms by adding dates to customers' signatures after the customers had signed the forms, re-used original customers' signature pages from forms that were previously executed, and altered the dates of the customers' signatures. In many instances, Geiger altered the forms previously executed by his customers, by adding signature dates in pencil, to facilitate his practice of erasing prior dates and re-dating the customers' original signatures from previously executed forms for re-use on subsequent transactions.

Specifically, between October 2005 and October 2010, Geiger falsified 115 forms relating to the accounts of 14 customers to cause disbursements totaling approximately \$562,008.65. These documents and transactions are more fully described in Exhibit A, which was attached to and incorporated into the Complaint.

In late 2005, and again in late 2008, Thrivent reminded Geiger that re-using signatures, altering dates, and completing forms in pencil were inconsistent with the Firm's policies and

procedures. But Geiger continued to engage in each of these prohibited practices for at least five years, through October 2010.

FIRST CAUSE OF ACTION
Falsification / Alteration of Customer Documents
(Violations of NASD Rule 2110 and FINRA Rule 2010)

NASD Rule 2110 and FINRA Rule 2010 require members and their associated persons, in the conduct of their business, to “observe high standards of commercial honor and just and equitable principles of trade.”

As described above and detailed in Exhibit A attached to the Complaint, from October 2005 through October 2010, Geiger falsified 115 documents by using non-authentic signatures and altered dates to effect transactions relating to the accounts of customers AMH, APH, AS, BAF, EGF, EWE, JP, LAD, LML, MLL, RAL, SHM, SM and WMJ.

Geiger’s repeated use of falsified documents to facilitate transactions, including but not limited to annuity or life insurance settlement option surrenders, withdrawals and transfers, and life insurance distributions, was inconsistent with Thrivent’s policies and procedures, and Geiger’s obligation to conduct his business activities in accordance with ethical standards.

Based on the foregoing, Respondent Geiger violated NASD Rule 2110 for customer documents altered before December 15, 2008, and FINRA Rule 2010 for customer documents altered on or after December 15, 2008.

Based on these considerations, the sanctions hereby imposed by the acceptance of the Offer are in the public interest, are sufficiently remedial to deter Respondent from any future misconduct, and represent a proper discharge by FINRA, of its regulatory responsibility under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934.

SANCTIONS

It is ordered that Respondent be suspended for three and one-half (3 ½) months and be fined in the amount of \$5,000.

Respondent agrees to pay the monetary sanction upon notice that this Offer has been accepted and that such payments are due and payable. Respondent has submitted an Election of Payment form showing the method by which he proposes to pay the fine imposed.

The sanctions imposed herein shall be effective on a date set by FINRA staff.

SO ORDERED.

FINRA

Signed on behalf of the
Director of ODA, by delegated authority



Jill L. Jablonow
Senior Regional Counsel
FINRA Department of Enforcement
300 S. Grand Avenue, Suite 1600
Los Angeles, CA 90071
(213) 613-2659 (phone)
(213) 617-1570 (fax)
Email: jill.jablonow@finra.org