

**BEFORE THE MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS FOR LICENSED
PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS**

**In the Matter of:
Lynn Etheridge, Licensee**

No.: 2018-52

FINAL ORDER

This matter came for hearing on January 16th, 2020, before the Mississippi State Board of Examiners for Licensed Professional Counselors (“Board”) to provide Lynn Etheridge (“Respondent”) with an opportunity to respond to the allegations contained within the Complaint. A quorum of Board Members was present throughout the hearing and deliberation the matter. Hon. Cammie Wyatt, Special Assistant Attorney General, served as Administrative Hearing Officer and presided at the hearing. The Board’s Executive Director, LeeAnn Mordecai, and Legal Counsel for the Board, Hon. Ken Walley, Special Assistant Attorney General, were present at the hearing. The Respondent was noticed in accordance with the Board’s regulations as to the time and location of the hearing. Respondent personally appeared at the hearing and was represented by counsel, Hon. Wade G. Manor. Thereafter, the case was called for hearing without objection from any party.

After considering the testimony and the documentary evidence presented at the hearing, including the file on the Respondent at the Board’s office, the Board finds clear and convincing evidence of the following Findings of Fact:

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. The Board is a duly constituted authority for licensing and regulating the counseling profession in the State of Mississippi.

2. Lynn Etheridge, the Respondent to this action, holds a license to practice as a professional counselor in Mississippi, having been issued Licensed Professional Counselor, Number 1046, on 11/26/2003.
3. On or about December 31, 2018, the Board received a copy of a complaint filed by Mary Stephens Ruffin. The complaint alleges that Etheridge changed her role in counseling Ruffin's child, acted outside her competency and failed to obtain informed consent.
4. The Board, subsequently, filed a Notice of Hearing and Complaint against the Respondent on October 3rd, 2019, setting this matter for hearing on November 22nd, 2019. The Respondent was properly served with the Notice of Hearing and Complaint by certified mail, which was directed to the Respondent at her address registered with the Board.
5. The Board initiated an investigation and assigned Dr. Glenn Waller, Ph.D., LPC, as the investigator in this matter following receipt of the complaint.
6. At the hearing, the Board reviewed numerous records and documents relating to the complaint and heard the testimony of Dr. Glenn Waller, Ph.D., Mary Ruffin, and Lynn Etheridge, who testified about her role in treating the child, the nature of her involvement in a related court case, and on the difference between a forensic evaluator and a forensic interviewer.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

1. The Board has jurisdiction of this matter pursuant to Sections 73-30-7 and 73-30-21 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended. Venue is likewise properly placed before the Board to hear this matter.
2. Pursuant to Sections 73-30-7 and 73-30-21 of the *Mississippi Code of 1972*, as amended, as Chapter 8 of the Board's *Rules and Regulations*, the Board may, among other things, suspend or revoke a license, refuse to renew a license, reprimand a licensee, and/or impose such other requirements or restrictions as the board finds proper.
3. The Respondent received due, proper and timely notice of the charges against her, and of the time and place of the hearing. This matter is, therefore, properly before the Board.
4. The Board has complied with all relevant procedural legal requirements.
5. Pursuant to Section 73-30-13 of the Mississippi Code of 1972, as amended, and Chapter 7 of the Board's *Rules and Regulations*, individuals licensed by the Board adhere to the American Counseling Associations' *2014 Code of Ethics*.
6. After reviewing all the evidence and thorough deliberation, the Board found no clear and convincing evidence presented as to any count of the complaint.

ADJUDICATION

The Board orders and directs that:

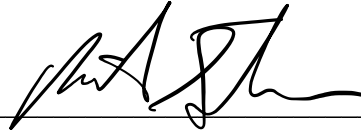
1. No disciplinary action shall be taken as to Complaint No. 2018-52, and this matter shall be dismissed with prejudice.

2. Though finding no guilt in any of the allegations of the Complaint, the Board was troubled by some of the evidence presented in this case and will issue a non-disciplinary advisory letter to Lynn Etheridge.
3. This action and order of the Board shall be public record and shall be spread upon the minutes of the Board as its official act and deed.

SO ORDERED this the 14th day of July 2020.

MISSISSIPPI STATE BOARD OF EXAMINERS
FOR LICENSED PROFESSIONAL COUNSELORS

By: _____



Dr. Richard Strebeck, Chair
For and on behalf of the Board