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January 15, 2024

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Court
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Courthouse
450 Main Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Re: Dr. Michael Pines

To The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala:

I am an attorney who primarily practices family law. I have been in private practice for more than forty years. While practicing family law, I also serve as a guardian ad litem for minor children.

I have known Dr. Michael Pines professionally for over thirty years. We have crossed paths several times. Most times I was the court appointed guardian ad litem for a child/children and Dr. Pines was serving as the therapist for the child or children. At times I would meet with Dr. Pines and our mutual clients/patients.

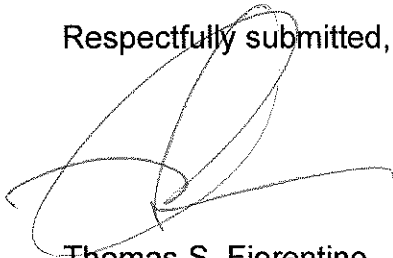
In all of my experiences with Dr. Pines, it goes without saying that he is the consummate professional, providing his clients with the best of care and advice. However, the services provided by Dr. Pines cannot be gauged only by his professionalism. He provides treatment to children. In all of my experiences representing children who were also patients of Dr. Pines, he stands out as a compassionate adult who truly cares for each of his patients. The children I have represented trust Dr. Pines. Oftentimes these are kids who are dealing with family trauma of some kind. They cannot trust their parents and they are looking for ways of dealing with their emotions. Dr. Pines is the guy they rely on. He offers assistance; he guides them; he helps them develop the coping skills that will lead them through this trauma. The children trust him, and in return, he trust and respects them. He offers his patients a shoulder to lean on, a safe place to go and share their concerns and most importantly, a place to be heard.

To support my words I am adding to my letter a note I received in January of 2021 regarding a child Dr. Pines and I had as ward and patient. [I have redacted parts of the letter.]

The author of this letter states Mike Pines was "instrumental in helping make her [the author's daughter] life meaningful and happy."

That's the Dr. Michael Pines I know.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas S. Fiorentino". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping initial "T" and "S".

Thomas S. Fiorentino
TSF/nrn
Enc.

YOUR NEW LEAD FROM YOUR WEBSITE

01

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02

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NAME: [REDACTED]

COMPANY:

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HOW DID YOU LOCATE OUR SITE?:Internet Search

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE CONTACTED?:

REASON YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE CONTACTED:No contact necessary thanks. Just a thank you note for Tom who represented my daughter back many years ago: Tom, Not sure I have the right person, pretty sure from the ad pic but as I was going through old papers I landed on case files for the divorce I went through in which you were the Guardian ad Litum for my daughter Rachel. Been a few years but I got to thinking that many of the cases you folks work through once litigated become just electronic case files for you guys. I just wanted to thank you for the great work you did to protect Rachel at a very difficult time in her life. She's now 29, living in Washington, DC and has a Masters Degree in Public Health working as an analyst for the Elizabeth Glazer Pediatric AIDS foundation. She is married to a Lawyer (of all people) and living a wonderful life. We get together often and I do think back to those heady days in Rockville, CT. She prospered after the trials (most likely in spite of me not because of me) and for that I have a long list of folks that I am thankful for. I still keep in touch with Lou (Kiefer) but you and Mike Pines were instrumental in helping make her life meaningful and happy. ~~When we were in the hospital she was~~
~~up maybe twice a week and clearly more disturbed than before. @~~
~~side note she did apparently get a degree in Psychology and is now doing~~

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Thanks again. Just a short note from the past! [REDACTED]

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Best regards,
Martindale
info@martindale.com

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SIDNEY S. HOROWITZ, P.H.D., LLC

Clinical & Forensic Psychological Services

88 BRADLEY ROAD SUITE 8

WOODBIDGE, CONNECTICUT 06525

(203) 203-206-8699

DR.SIDNEYHOROWITZ@GMAIL.COM

December 29, 2023

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Courthouse
450 main Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103
RE: Dr. Michael Pines

Dear Judge Nagala,

I have been asked to write a letter of reference and support regarding Dr. Michael Pines who I understand has pled guilty to charges of healthcare fraud related to his Medicaid billing practices. I do so willingly.

I am a clinical and forensic psychologist who has been licensed in the State of Connecticut since 1983. I have worn different "hats" during my career including administrative, clinical and teaching roles. My principal focus has been with involvement concerning the best interests of children. In this regard I have evaluated children and adults and testified in criminal and civil cases throughout Connecticut. I was involved in the establishment of the Regional Trial Docket in Middletown and served as Special Master in numerous complex family matters. I have lectured at the Connecticut Judges Institute and served on a Governor's Task Force concerning Divorce.

It has been in the aforementioned roles that I had opportunities to have met and worked with Dr. Michael Pines. Over my career I was asked (court stipulated /ordered) to perform custody evaluations in highly contested divorce matters. I was often asked to make recommendations concerning referrals to other psychologists who could provide therapy for the children who were caught in their parent's civil war. Dr. Pines was one of the psychologists who was the recipient of these referrals. He evidenced sophisticated clinical skills, compassion, and tenacity in these most difficult situations. Parents involved in these highly contested matters often "took no hostages" and would often attack the care providers who were trying to protect the children caught in the crossfire of their upset. Dr. Pines did not shy away from his responsibilities and was steadfast in his dedication to protecting the psychological well-being of the children.

There has been a growing concern with mental health professionals and their legal and financial colleagues to find alternative dispute mechanisms that might assist families in their divorce process. It was in this process, too, that I had an opportunity to meet, work with and observe Dr. Pines' interest, motivation and skills in assisting children survive – if not thrive – during and after their parents' divorce.

I cannot comment on any alleged criminal activity for which Dr. Pines has pled guilty. I can say, with certainty, that Dr. Pines has been a champion of children's emotional well-being during and after highly contested divorce situations.

I am available and willing to respond to any questions that you may have concerning my knowledge and work with Dr. Pines.

Sidney S. Horowitz, Ph.D.

Sidney S. Horowitz, Ph.D.
Connecticut License # 001070

SHEILA R. DUPUIS, PSY.D.

January 15, 2024

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building United States Courthouse
450 Main Street Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Dear Judge Nagala:

I am writing on behalf of Dr. Michael Pines. I have been a colleague of Dr. Pines for the past 19 years while sharing an office suite in Glastonbury, CT. While we share space, we maintain separate practices and inner offices. We have a waiting room in common and split expenses.

I have been a licensed clinical psychologist for over 36 years. I trained at the California School of Psychology in San Diego and was licensed in California from 1998 to 2004 when I moved back to Connecticut. I work with teens and young adults coping with anxiety and/or depression as well as women experiencing infertility issues. I also work with athletes to help minimize their anxiety and improve their performance. I am a member of the American Psychology Association and The Association of Applied Sports Psychology.

I have shared an office suite with Dr. Pines for my entire career as a private practice psychologist. In California, I worked in in-patient settings and out-patient clinics. Dr. Pines was very helpful to me when I first became licensed in CT, and he provided me with good advice and valuable information as I set up my private practice. Since I was new to private practice, I often asked Dr. Pines for guidance or clarity on various aspects of being self-employed including fees, insurance companies and billing procedures. He also provided referrals to me which helped to get my practice going. Dr. Pines and I continue to refer potential clients to each other depending on the clients' needs.

Working in private practice can be isolating, and I feel fortunate to be able to consult with Dr. Pines on various cases when I need a better understanding of one of my clients. Other times, we worked with clients from the same family and would collaborate on those cases (with the clients' consent). Dr. Pines has also consulted with me on some of his cases. Having a colleague in the same space is helpful when managing a private practice.

My observation of Dr. Pines' interactions with his clients and their parents is limited to the waiting room. I have observed most of the kids, ranging in age from pre-school to teen, being open and eager to meet with Dr. Pines. They are talkative with him about their week or plans for the next week (i.e. school, sports, etc.) both before and after their sessions. He has a gentle, friendly way of engaging with kids and is always respectful – even with the few clients I observed to be resistant to treatment or upset and not wanting to meet. In general, I notice that most of Dr. Pines' clients look forward to meeting and talking with him. Dr. Pines always seems to be on top of what is going on in each child's world including how their professional teams are doing (for example, he will ask how the Yankees or Red Sox are doing depending on which team the child follows.) He is cognizant of

the likes and dislikes of the many children he works with each week and uses that information to build rapport.

While we maintain separate practices, we do share expenses. We pay our rent separately, but our common bills such as internet, electricity, office supplies, etc., are maintained by Dr. Pines. The accounts are in his name and each month he lets me know what I owe for each service provided. He is organized with these bills, and I feel very comfortable having Dr. Pines oversee the shared expenses. He also manages other aspects of the office such as arranging cleaning or repairs.

Dr. Pines is committed to his family. His wife went through breast cancer a few years ago and he was there to support her throughout her treatment and recovery, which meant missing work or working part-time so he could be home. He did a good job of balancing what his family needed with what his clients needed. Dr. Pines often talks about his son Drew, and he is very proud of his accomplishments from finishing college to his current job as photographer. Dr. Pines proudly displays one of Drew's photos from a concert on the wall in the waiting room.

I grew up in Glastonbury and as a child/teen, I remember people going to Dr. Pines for help with various issues. Dr. Pines has been practicing in Glastonbury since 1979 and is well known to many Glastonbury families. He has a good reputation which he developed over his many years in town helping multiple individuals and families.

Based on my observations and interactions with Michael Pines over the past 19 years, I find him to be a knowledgeable and experienced psychologist who is dedicated and committed to helping his clients. He is reliable and clearly important to his many clients. In addition, Dr. Pines is a caring, devoted, and supportive father and husband.

Sincerely,



Sheila R. Dupuis, Psy.D.
Licensed Clinical Psychologist
860.516.0123 (new number)

ROBERT J. KOR, ATTORNEY AT LAW

67 North Main Street, West Hartford, Connecticut 06107 • (860) 521-2806 • Fax: (860) 521-9491 • www.Kor-Law.com

January 16, 2024

Attorney Cody N. Guarnieri
Brown, Paindiris, and Scott
100 Pearl Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Re: Michael Pines

Dear Cody:

Enclosed herewith is my letter in support of Michael. Please feel free to use it at your discretion.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Kor

ROBERT J. KOR, ATTORNEY AT LAW

67 North Main Street, West Hartford, Connecticut 06107 • (860) 521-2806 • Fax: (860) 521-9491 • www.Kor-Law.com

January 16, 2024

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
450 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Judge Nagala:

I write this letter on behalf of Michael Pines. I have known Michael on a personal basis for nearly thirty years. He and his wife, Gina, and their son, Drue, have been guests at my house for many social occasions. Likewise I have spent many hours at their home over the years. My time spent with Michael has given me the opportunity to get to know him.

In my experience with Michael, I have found him to be a kind, gentle, and loving husband and father. I have further found him to be a compassionate person and always believed him to be truthful and honest.

When Michael described his misconduct regarding his professional billing practices, I was shocked. It seemed so out of character for the person I have known for so long. While his conduct cannot be excused, I believe that leniency in sentencing is appropriate. I do not believe that imprisonment to be warranted for this first offense. I believe it highly unlikely that Michael will ever again commit a criminal act.

It is my understanding that Michael intends to surrender his license to practice psychology in the state of Connecticut. I think this forfeiture of his license to be warranted in light of his misconduct. It is further my understanding that he intends to make a substantial offer of restitution to the government.

Given Michael's professional skills as a psychologist, perhaps some form of community service would be an appropriate sanction for his actions, such as having him provide a certain number of hours of pro bono counseling assigned to a non-profit organization such as The Village in Hartford, CT or the Bridge Family Center in West Hartford, CT.

By way of background, I have been an attorney licensed to practice in the state of Connecticut for more than forty years. I am also licensed to practice in the District Court of Connecticut, the Second Circuit Court of Appeals, and the U.S. Supreme Court. I was a member of the Statewide Grievance Committee for the period of 1996 to 2003. From 1977 to 1997, I was an attorney with Neighborhood Legal Services in Hartford, Connecticut, providing free legal

services to those with limited financial means. Since then, I have been a solo practitioner in West Hartford.

Michael's crimes against the government cannot be ignored. Some form of punishment for his actions is justified. A prison sentence however is not warranted. I urge the court to be lenient in sentencing Michael Pines. I hope the Court will exercise discretion and sentence Michael to community service so that those who need counseling and therapy can benefit from his many years of experience as a psychologist.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert J. Kor". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the typed name.

Robert J. Kor

Rev. Dr. Robert S. Henderson
244 Wood Pond Road.
Glastonbury, Connecticut 06033

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala, United States District Judge

United States District of Connecticut

Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building

United States Courthouse

450 Main Street

Hartford, Connecticut 06103

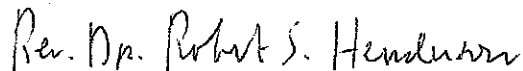
Re: Dr. Michael Pines

I have been an ordained Protestant Minister for 54 years. Before retirement I was the Director of the Pastoral Counseling Center of Glastonbury. I have known Dr. Pines for 40 years. During that time I never heard anything negative about him. The referrals I made to Dr. Pines all reported they had a positive experience with him.

Several years ago the Pastoral Counseling Center was accredited by a professional association. Dr. Pines graciously met with the committee as a psychological consultant. The Center was grateful.

Dr. Pines has worked helpfully with our schools in Glastonbury. Dr. Pines provided several psychological programs for our teachers and their continuing education.

Sincerely,



Rev. Dr. Robert S. Henderson

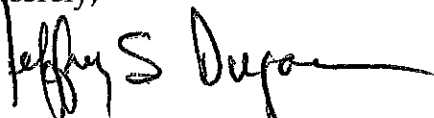
326 Seabury Drive
Bloomfield, Connecticut 06002

Cody N. Guarnieri, Esq.
Brown Paindiris & Scott, LLP
100 Pearl Street, 10th Floor
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Dear Mr. Guarnieri,

Enclosed is my letter of reference for Dr. Michael Pines. Please let me know if there is anything else I can do to assist in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey S. Dugan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

The Rev. Jeffrey S. Dugan

326 Seabury Drive
Bloomfield, Connecticut 06002

December 29, 2023

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Courthouse
450 Main Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Dear Judge Nagala,

My name is Jeffrey Dugan. I am a retired Episcopal priest living at Seabury Retirement Community in Bloomfield. I was Rector at St. James Episcopal Church in Farmington from 1990 to 2010.

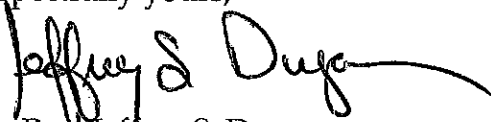
I have known Michael Pines for almost twenty-eight years. He and his wife Gina started coming to St. James Parish after the birth of their son Drue in 1996. For the following fourteen years until my retirement in 2010, Michael and his family were active members of the parish. The whole family attended church almost every Sunday. I baptized Drue, and his parents made sure he attended Sunday School regularly. As he grew, Drue became an acolyte and crucifer. He was eventually confirmed by the bishop at St. James. Each year when the parish family came together to decorate the church for Christmas, the Pines family could be counted on for their active involvement. At one point the parish decided to refurbish and redecorate the parish hall, and Gina volunteered her time as a principal consultant in that redecoration. On a regular basis, Michael and Gina would host the Sunday Coffee Hour after church.

In his capacity as a psychologist, Michael accepted my invitation to take a lead role in several book discussion sessions I ran over the years. The discussion series of Dan Brown's books (*Angels and Demons*, *The Da Vinci Code*) were memorable ones in which Michael displayed his exceptional sensitivity and receptivity to the questions and comments of those in attendance, as well as his insightful responses to them. The demonstration of those uncommon skills helped clarify to me why I kept hearing from his colleagues and others in the community about the remarkable results that consistently resulted from his interaction with and treatment of troubled children and their families.

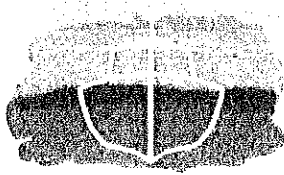
After my retirement in 2010, Gina served on the search committee for my successor. When I have attended functions at St. James since my retirement, Michael and Gina have invariably been present, a testament to the family's enduring participation in and commitment to the life of the parish.

All my interactions with Michael over the past three decades have revealed him to be a remarkably intelligent human being endowed with integrity, honesty and loyalty. Any financial misconduct on his part is completely out of character with the Michael Pines I have had the good fortune to know.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey S. Dugan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

The Rev. Jeffrey S. Dugan



The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Court Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Court House
450 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06203

Dear Judge Nagala,

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter regarding Dr. Michael Pines. I am pleased to offer a reference for Michael and hope that it is helpful. I have been the full-time pastor of St. James Parish (Episcopal) for nearly 12 years, arriving in July of 2012. I have been an Episcopal priest for many years, with much counsel and care offered to members of churches that I served during that time. I am the father of four grown children, married for more than 30 years, and act as volunteer chaplain of the Farmington Fire and Police Departments.

Michael and I have known each other for more than 11 years, almost as long as I have lived in Connecticut. Michael is married to a very active member of our church, Gina Pines. Michael comes to church occasionally, as our faith is not Michael's Jewish faith, but I have come to know him in other ways. Michael has, over the years, given me guidance on challenges we have had with children and youth in our parish. On these occasions, I have sought Michael's advice, not officially, but to work things past him – given his background working with adolescents – and trying to find ways forward with a given church family who is struggling. Michael has, on many occasions, given me names and contacts for practitioners in need of counseling (marital and otherwise), professionals that he knew who might be able to guide church members through difficult times. Michael has worked, professionally, with several young people from our church (referred by someone else, not by St. James) and has been able to help them in moving through a challenging mental health or emotional problem. Those families, who I wasn't even aware that Michael was working with, have personally told me that Michael's work with their children was indispensable in moving them forward to a better place in their lives. Michael, in all that I have known of him, has been generous and kind. His family has always come first, and he is by all that has ever been reported to me, including by his wife and son, an attentive father and husband.

May it please the court to reach out for further information or reference, I am happy to provide that. God's many blessings.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George Roberts".

Fr. George Roberts, Pastor
St. James Parish
Farmington, CT

St. James Episcopal Church

3 Mountain Road Farmington, CT 06032 860-677-1564

MICHAEL B. PINES, Ph.D.
41C NEW LONDON TURNPIKE
GLASTONBURY, CONNECTICUT 06033

Telephone (860) 659-0579
Fax (860) 659-0570

For to: Father George Robertz 1-860-677-8219

From: Michael B. Pines PhD

Date: 12/18/23

of Pages including cover sheet 3

Re: Father George -

- memo -

Thank, Michael

MEMORANDUM

TO: FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF MICHAEL PINES, PHD
FROM: CODY N. GUARNIERI, ESQ.
DATE: JANUARY 1, 2024

As you may know, Dr. Michael Pines is anticipated to enter a guilty plea in Federal Court on a single criminal charge of healthcare fraud related to his Medicaid billing practices. He will be sentenced in the Federal Court in Hartford, Connecticut on a date that has not yet been scheduled. At this time we are assisting Dr. Pines in gathering background information to present to the Court. Michael has identified you as someone who might be willing to write a character reference letter on his behalf.

A complete assessment of Michael's background and character will prove critical to the Court's evaluation of him. A letter of reference that reflects positively on his background, particularly his professional work and family life, will help the Court better evaluate Michael and possibly assist in a favorable resolution to this difficult situation. Before writing on Michael's behalf, please read this memorandum so you can better understand the type of letter that proves most useful to the Court. These are merely suggestions, however. Please feel free to write whatever you believe will be helpful to the Court in sentencing Michael.

1. Address but *do not send* your letter to:

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Courthouse
450 Main Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

2. *Do not mail your letter to the Court.* Instead, please send it to my attention at the following address:

Cody N. Guarnieri, Esq.
Brown Pardiniis & Scott, LLP
100 Pearl Street, 10th Floor
Hartford, CT 06103

Or

Email to cody@bpslawyers.com

Or

Fax to (860) 522-2490

We will forward all the letters together as a package to the judge prior to any sentencing hearing.

3. Identify yourself in the letter's opening paragraph, briefly describing for the Court your personal and professional background.
4. Describe how long, and in what context, you have known Michael. Your letter should detail your experience with him in areas that relate to his qualities as a person, such as personal and professional integrity, helpfulness, generosity, and commitment to his family and community, etc. Do not feel that you must discuss all of these qualities, though you may do so. It is our understanding that Michael is a caring and compassionate mental health provider who has spent decades providing the highest quality services to his patients, mostly children. Moreover, we understand that Michael has a strong commitment to his family and community and that the conduct he engaged in, overbilling or wrongly billing Medicaid, is out of character with the person you know.

Describe your experiences with Michael where he has shown his dedication to his family, his professional associates and patients, service to the community, etc. It is important to give clear examples in your own words of how Michael demonstrates these qualities. *Specific detailed examples of your experiences with Michael are the most important aspect of any letter.* Do not worry about length, so long as your letter is specific.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact Cody N. Guarnieri at (860) 522-3343, via fax at (860) 522-2490 or e-mail at cody@bpslawyers.com. Thank you very much for your help.



The Children's LAW Center, Inc.
30 Arbor Street, Suite 208
Hartford, CT 06106

January 25, 2024

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Courthouse
450 Main Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Your Honor,

I am writing this letter in support of Dr. Michael Pines, a psychologist who does amazing work with children and adolescents in the state of Connecticut.

I am the Executive Director of The Children's Law Center of CT and have been so for over 23 years. Our mission is to promote the best possible outcomes for children and families in transition or crisis by providing access to legal services and support they could not otherwise afford and by advancing collaborative, non-adversarial options for resolving conflicts outside the court system. Our main program is the representation of indigent children in Family Court in high conflict cases. It is in this regard that I know and highly respect Dr. Pines.

This organization has worked with Dr. Pines on a number of cases. In each of these cases, our wards, the children, were struggling – and some are continuing to struggle – with various behavioral issues due to their parents' unrelenting hostilities. They suffered from behavioral regression, such as bedwetting, sleeplessness, and outbursts. Their grades declined and some engaged in self-mutilating behaviors. It is their work with Dr. Pines that resulted in tremendous improvement in their psychological and emotional well-being. He is a very intelligent, empathetic, and gifted psychologist. To say that he excels at his job is an understatement.

In addition to his work with children and adolescents, he also supports the attorneys who are engaged in the court battle trying to help these kids. He is responsive, well informed and clear and concise with his information. He provided an understandable summary of the struggles my ward faces that allowed me to prepare my testimony and recommendations for a parenting plan to ease the strain in this young child's life and allow her to live a more stress-free life. I could not have successfully represented her interests without his input. It was invaluable.



The Children's LAW Center, Inc.
30 Arbor Street, Suite 208
Hartford, CT 06106

January 24, 2024

Page Two

Dr. Pines provides a vital service to the children and the professionals helping children in this state. In our cases, in particular, the children are from families of indigence, meaning they are on HUSKY. We struggle to find providers willing to take HUSKY and it is a huge loss to our clientele that Dr. Pines will no longer be available to them. He has been extremely generous with his time for these young children and truly wanted to do all he could to help them navigate the difficult terrain of horrible conflict at home. He often provided the only safe place in which these kids could express their true feelings about what was happening around them. The work is difficult, heart wrenching work and Dr. Pines does it extremely well.

Dr. Pines provided me and other staff attorneys with a thorough understanding of the challenges our wards were facing so that we were prepared for every court date in an effort to continue to assist his patients outside of sessions. He was always very generous with his time and knowledge.

I truly have the utmost respect for Dr. Pines. He is a genuinely kind, caring and empathetic individual. He cares about his patients deeply. I am honored to call him a colleague and friend.

Best regards,

Justine Rakich-Kelly

MICHELLE GORMAN ASSOCIATES

345 Ridgewood Road
West Hartford, CT 06107
(860) 521-4332

January 21, 2024

College and Private
School Placement

Educational Counseling

Advisory Service

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Federal Building
United States Courthouse
456 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Judge Sarala Nagala:

I have worked with Dr. Michael Pines for 34 years as an educational consultant placing middle school and high school students in private schools and colleges. When I started my practice, I realized that I needed to connect to a professional who could help with students having psychological issues. Therefore, I contacted counselors in public and private schools in West Hartford, Farmington, Avon, and Glastonbury to discern who is the most respected therapist. My contacts unanimously and instantly referred Michael as the most reliable and effective source. I vividly recall comments such as "He's no nonsense...very professional...communicative...affective."

I have been referring students to Dr. Pines who needed help ranging from family, school, and social difficulties to depression and anxiety. His range of understanding coupled with his professional acumen has served to build his reputation as a deeply effectual therapist. I can only imagine the countless individuals he has saved over the years.

A few cases that come to mind in my years of practice include an eighth-grade student who attempted suicide many times by ingesting pills as well as batteries. He not only saved her from self-harm but also helped her parents to deal with the enormity of this frightful illness. This young student went on to complete high school and to integrate herself into her family in good health.

Another case, which eluded me, was a high school freshman who had been expelled from school for developed a written list of female students he would like to rape.

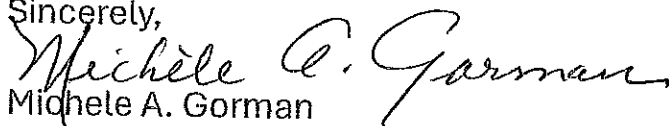
Perhaps the most challenging case we collaborated on involved a contentious divorce and a complicated child custody issue. The family consisted of three children, one of whom was adopted. Parents were divided particularly regarding their adoptive son who was placed in boarding school. The mother, abandoning her adoptive son, went "under ground" with their biological children.

Frankly, I have dealt with several therapists, (from students who were working with their own) and have been dismayed by their hubris approach to schools they have never visited and/or have formed opinions based on gossip. Although Dr. Pines is more familiar with our local public and private schools than most, he respects professional boundaries. Although I rely on his assessment of a student's needs, he listens and supports my academic suggestions. I refer exclusively to him because of the depth of his sincere and enlightening core. To borrow the current vernacular, Dr. Pines is my "go to" person for professional advice. I have never received negative comments or complaints about him in all thirty plus years.

Michael and his wife, Gina, approached me thirteen years ago to place their son, Drew, in high school and subsequently in college. They were exemplary clients because they were unified in their aspirations for Drew and focused on schools which would be best for him. This experience evolved into a personal and enduring friendship. My husband and I have enjoyed numerous dinners and social events with Gina and Michael.

As his friend and colleague, I hope the court will concentrate on the decades of Michael's vital and significant contribution to countless families and to society. He is loved, highly respected and an unusually gifted therapist.

Sincerely,


Michele A. Gorman

Michele Gorman Associates

Tulsa Family Development Center

The Honorable Sarah V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Court House
450 Main Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

January 16, 2024

RE: Michael Pines, Ph.D., P.C.

Dear Judge Nagala,

I have been asked to write a letter regarding my relationship with Michael Pines, as a friend and as a colleague. I have known Dr. Pines for the past 30+ years and we have maintained these relationships via phone calls, text messages, email, attending conferences and spending time together socially. I am a resident of Tulsa, Oklahoma where I have lived for 47 years and I am an enrolled member of the Osage Nation (my maternal grandmother was an original allottee of the Osage Reservation). I am a licensed Counseling Psychologist (#411) and have been working as a licensed psychologist for the past 40 years. I have worked with the entire family constellation with an emphasis on trauma and attachment issues.

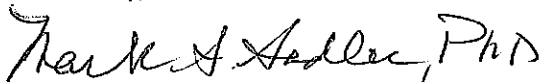
Michael and I met in Miami, Florida during a conference in the late 1980's. This conference nurtured our professional and personal relationship. The conference also led to the formation of ATTACH, Association for the Training on Trauma and Attachment in Children. It has since become an international organization. Michael served on the original Board of Directors and Dr. Pines served as President of the organization as well. I saw and met with Michael at subsequent ATTACH conferences over the years held in various areas of the United States.

I have spent time with Michael and his family, on occasion, as he has with my family. He has been known to me as a person of the highest principals, caring, compassionate, deeply caring for his clients and above board in his code of ethics. At times we have collaborated on client cases and I have always trusted his insight, judgment and suggestions.

I have known Michael for 30+ years and I consider him a close and trusted friend and colleague. He has always shown a deep concern for his family, profession and community. Needless to say, I am shocked by the conduct he engaged in and find it totally out of character for the "Dr. Michael Pines" I know.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to provide you with my experience and insights regarding this man that I know and love.

Sincerely,



Mark S. Sadler, PhD

January 30, 2024

The Honorable Savala V. Nagala
US District Court Judge
US District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
US Courthouse
450 Main Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Your Honor:

I am writing this letter in support of my colleague and friend, Dr. Michael Pines.

I have served as an attorney in the state of Connecticut since 1999, dedicating my legal career primarily to Family Law. Currently, I focus on representing predominantly indigent children involved in high-conflict custody cases as a staff attorney at The Children's Law Center of CT, a position I have held since 2019.

I have been acquainted with Dr. Michael Pines since the initiation of my legal career in 1999. During my tenure as a family law attorney in private practice, I primarily represented divorcing parties, many of whom had children. In 2004, I broadened my practice to encompass guardian ad litem ("GAL") work. In this role, my objective was to assist parents in overcoming conflicts and formulating a parenting responsibility plans aligned with the best interests of their children. Despite undergoing extensive training and attending numerous seminars, my day-to-day work heavily relied on the expertise of professionals like Dr. Pines, who specializes in aiding children coping with the upheaval of their familial structure.

Whenever I discovered that Dr. Pines was serving as the therapist for my wards, it brought me relief, as I knew they were receiving treatment marked by sensitivity and kindness. In cases where the children were not yet undergoing therapy, my initial step was to inquire about Dr. Pines' availability with a call.

Dr. Pines consistently exhibits great generosity with his time and guidance. He promptly returns my calls and attentively listens to the details, posing insightful questions about the family's situation. His thoughtful insights extend to considering the experiences of both children and parents in the case. He has assisted me in numerous instances in formulated strategies for the secure and compassionate reorganization of families. His generosity extends to all cases, whether they pertain to his patients or other clients; he is simply eager to lend a helping hand.

Currently employed at The Children's Law Center, a non-profit organization providing no-cost or low-cost representation for minor children, Dr. Pines' contributions have become even more crucial. Our wards typically come from impoverished backgrounds, often exposed to family violence, lacking sufficient educational support, and grappling with trauma. The majority of our families lack private insurance, and, unfortunately, the number of experienced therapists willing to handle such challenging cases has significantly decreased over the years. It is disconcerting that the children in greatest need of seasoned practitioners struggle to access them. Dr. Pines' willingness to undertake these difficult cases is something for which I will always be grateful.

Dr. Pines has consistently demonstrated qualities of honesty, trustworthiness, professionalism, and compassion in all my interactions with him. His sincere dedication to the mental well-being of children in this state is unparalleled.

Respectfully,

Margaret M. Bogeh

Staff Attorney and Program Liaison

The Children's Law Center



NEVINS LAW GROUP LLC

773 Main Street Manchester, CT 06040
(P) 860-289-4455 (F) 860-289-8968
www.NevinsLaw.com

January 19, 2024

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Courthouse
450 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

RE: Dr. Michael Pines

Dear Judge Nagala:

Respectfully, I am an attorney admitted to practice in the Connecticut state and district courts. I have been an attorney for almost 28 years and have worked in Connecticut for an insurance company first and in private practice for the last 26 years. My undergraduate degree is in psychology. I have a good amount of work experience dealing with psychotherapists. I am happy to provide information to this Honorable Court about my experiences with Dr. Michael Pines, who has made me aware of his pending criminal matter.

I have known Dr. Michael Pines professionally for 10 or more years, having had the pleasure of working with him in some capacity on a number of my cases. He has provided psychotherapeutic services to a number of my clients, including children for whom I have served as a Guardian *ad Litem*. I have also worked with him to help high-conflict families navigate their differences, always with the best interest of the children as our focus. I have always found Dr. Pines to be diligent, professional, compassionate and attentive. He has been a great therapeutic resource to my clients and my wards. Moreover, when I had proper authorizations to communicate with Dr. Pines, I found him to be a valuable resource to me in my capacity as attorney and as Guardian *ad Litem*. He provided keen insight and objective recommendations and was always willing to problem solve, all for the benefit of his patient. He showed great reserve and patience in even the most challenging of matters. He always seemed earnest and sincere in his desire to help.

I consider Dr. Pines to be a talented, caring provider. Because of my experience with him professionally, I felt confident several years ago to refer a child, who is a close relative, to him for individual counseling, with great success. Thank you for considering my comments. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Very truly yours,

NEVINS LAW GROUP LLC

Kathleen M. Nevins



JERROLD W. GOODMAN, PH.D.
JILL SHALAN PH.D.
JANET SCHRAGER, PH.D.
SHERRY KELLY, PH.D.
LUCIANO ABBATEMARCO, L.C.S.W.
CHRISTINE P. GAUDIO, L.C.S.W.

JANET SCHRAGER, PH.D.
68 SOUTH MAIN STREET
WEST HARTFORD, CT 06107
TELEPHONE (860) 561-6179
FAX: (860) 561-6179

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Courthouse
450 Main Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

January 1, 2024

Dear Judge Nagala,

In the 40 years that I have worked with Dr. Michael Pines as a colleague, I have referred cases to him and collaborated with him. It has been my experience that Dr. Pines has always been compassionate, helpful, and committed to his patients. Specifically, I have worked with Dr. Pines on cases including children and their families. I have found him to be caring and devoted with some very challenging cases. Dr. Pines has consistently been receptive and responsive to any referrals I have sent to him. I have had confidence that he would be helpful with the children who needed his help. In one specific case that required that I testify in the family court, the family court judge requested the name of a psychologist that could be helpful with a child living in a high conflict family. The judge was very receptive to the suggestion of Dr. Pines, as she had previous experience with him. Knowing that judges respected his work confirmed my trust in working with Dr. Pines.

Some of the most difficult cases, in which psychologists are asked to provide care, include the necessity to reunify children with a parent in families of divorce. Dr. Pines has been understanding and supportive in working with these very difficult situations. It has been my experience that Dr. Pines has been successful in reunifying children with parents facing a challenge in their relationship with their child.

In knowing Dr. Pines over many years, it has always been my experience that he demonstrated dedication to his work.

Thank you for your time in reading this letter.

Sincerely,



Janet B. Schrage, Ph.D.

LAW OFFICES OF
J. DAVID MORRISSEY

220 MAIN STREET
FARMINGTON, CONNECTICUT 06032

TELEPHONE (860) 677-6454
TELEFAX (860) 677-0865
Email: JDMLAW@comcast.net

April 11, 2024

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Courthouse
450 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Re: Michael Pines, PhD

Dear Judge Nagala:

I am a practicing attorney and retired probate judge in the State of Connecticut. I am writing to the court regarding my association with Dr. Michael Pines. I have represented Dr. Pines and his family in the past with respect to real estate transactions and estate planning matters.

I have considered myself a friend to Michael for over two decades. He has always presented himself as a devoted husband and father. He is a kind and affable friend and I know that in his practice he has helped hundreds of young people. I am hopeful the court will look favorably on his accomplishments and achievements in considering his case.

Very truly yours,



J. David Morrissey

JDM/vll

Dear Atty Guarnieri,

I hope this helps. Please
let me know if any thing more
is needed.

Very truly yours,

Judge Prestley (ret.)

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Courthouse
450 Main Street
Hartford, Connecticut

December 19, 2023

Dear Judge Nagala,

My name is Linda Pearce Prestley. I am a former Connecticut Assistant Attorneys General, a former Connecticut State Child Advocate, a retired Connecticut Superior Court Judge and now a practicing mediator and teacher. I am writing to you on behalf of Dr. Michael Pines. I understand that Dr. Pines will be appearing before you and will be entering a guilty plea on a Felony Criminal charge in Federal District Court.

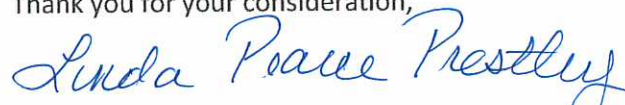
I have known Dr. Pines for over thirty-five years in our professional capacities. In our early years of practice, Dr. Pines was invaluable to both the State Attorney General's office where I was an Assistant Attorneys General and the Department of Children and Families, the state's client. Dr. Pines had a keen ability to evaluate children and their families who were facing family intervention by the state and to issue reports that were of the highest caliber. While those reports did not always support the state's position, I always believed that he was correct in his conclusions and recommendations to the court.

During my tenure as Connecticut's Child Advocate, when faced with some particularly difficult situations and legislation that affected children, I frequently called Dr. Pines for his insights. He was always responsive and took the time to provide me with the information and tools necessary to perform my mandates. During this time, I was a foster parent for the state of Connecticut as well. The therapy that he provided individual children in the foster care system has been considered by many to be second to none.

Finally, as a Superior Court Judge, I had the opportunity to observe Dr. Pines in the many hearings where he was called to testify as an expert. I can attest to the fact that Dr. Pines is highly regarded by my colleagues on the bench and by attorneys involved in the cases he appeared in. Dr. Pines has always been regarded as kind and compassionate and I believe that the conduct that has brought him before this court is completely out of character with what we know about him.

I recently spoke with Dr. Pines about writing this letter. In that conversation, he took full responsibility for his actions and understood that there are consequences to those actions. He is well aware of the seriousness of the charges against him and the factors that must be weighed in disposition. He freely acknowledged his failings and the impact on his family and on the Public trust. I believe that whatever this Court decides, Dr. Pines will accept that decision and do what needs to be done. I am hopeful that his extensive and positive contributions to the children and families of this state will be weighed in this Court's deliberation of his case.

Thank you for your consideration,



Hon. Linda Pearce Prestley (ret), Connecticut Judicial Branch

January 3, 2024

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham A. Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Courthouse
450 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

My name is Glenn A. Santoro, I am sixty-two years of age and am a law partner in a large regional law firm and have known Michael for approximately ten years. My first experience with Michael was joining him and another mutual friend as a golf threesome. My initial golf outings and future gatherings with Michael were enjoyable as his focus was not on himself but me and the other mutual friend. Our family, our health, our work. Our conversations never centered on Michael except to the extent he discussed his wife Gina and his son Drew. That is to say, Michael is a very outward and positive person dwelling on the accomplishments of others rather than himself.

Michael has shown his generosity from the start of our relationship and at each and every gathering. The little things, such as cigars for everyone despite providing cigars to us the last several golf outings and bringing a bottle of wine to social gatherings. Michael's demeanor and attitude has always been positive. As a friend, he has consistently found the positive in all situations.

I have also noticed and appreciated over the years his dedication to his family and friends. Most weekends he would golf with us in the morning only to return to the golf course the same day so that he could golf with his wife. Also, if we tried to make a weekday golf teatime, which was unusual, he would decline due to previous commitments to his patients and medical profession.

At this stage in my life and as a lawyer, I have experienced the grief of other friends and their family who have had legal issues or social or economic downturns in their lives. In most of such instances, I was not surprised by such revelations. As to Michael's conduct here with Medicaid, I was in complete surprise and denial that Michael could engage in such conduct. Michael has always been an upstanding person with the highest standards of conduct. Michael also maintained this standard when he contacted me to discuss, in general terms, his anticipated plea. He only blamed himself, told me of the support of his family and friends, and the professional treatment by the FBI. No excuses, no anger, only remorse and solitude in that restitution can be made.

I hope this letter is helpful to the Court. Michael cannot undo what has been done but, in my opinion, Michael is deserving of leniency and after restitution is completed, he can return to being an exemplary citizen.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Glenn".

Glenn A. Santoro

January 13, 2024

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Courthouse
450 Main Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Dear Judge Nagala,

I am writing this letter on behalf of Dr. Michael Pines, who will appear before you having acknowledged committing healthcare fraud related to his Medicaid billing practices. I am Michael's first cousin; our 99- and 94-year-old mothers are sisters and we have been close our whole lives. I am a clinical psychologist in Washington, DC, and consider myself a student of personality and an astute judge of character.

I must say that I was terribly shocked when Michael told me recently of what he had done. Both my mother and I would have thought him to be the last person we could imagine being dishonest in his practices. Over the many years I have known Michael, and even as a child, I have experienced him as straightforward, fair-minded, and honest. He is serious in manner, and rather shy, and can always be relied upon for solid counsel and wisdom whenever issues have arisen in the family. Michael is very loving and has a particularly kind and engaging manner with children, both in the course of his long clinical practice and with family members. When any of us have been in emotional need over the years, we know we can depend on Michael.

Michael is clearly torn up and deeply remorseful for the falsehoods in his Medicaid billing. He keeps apologizing repeatedly to the family for how he has let us down and let himself down and is determined to regain the family's trust and esteem. Michael has never been the type of person who disavows his mistakes or makes excuses for his misconduct, and he is not making any excuses now. Rather, he well understands that his behavior was wrongful, and he wants to make amends to the best of his ability. As a psychologist, I can attest that his self-recrimination has been brutal. At this point, a consequence that has already occurred is the fact that his own self-respect is shaken.

In a diligent and conscientious manner that is consistent with the man I have known him to be, Dr. Michael Pines is actively assessing and trying to make sense of his lapses in judgement. I fully expect that he will return to leading a straightforward and honest life. It is my sincere hope that in taking responsibility for his uncharacteristic and shameful actions, Michael can find some compassion for himself. When I expressed this hope to him just yesterday, he responded, "self-forgiveness will be a long time coming."

In your capacity as a protector of the common good, please consider that the actions of Dr. Michael Pines are aberrations in what has been a long and honest professional and personal life.

Respectfully yours,

Sally Bloom-Feshbach

Sally Bloom-Feshbach, Ph.D.
2919 Garfield Street NW
Washington, DC 20008

EMILY J. MOSKOWITZ

ATTORNEY AT LAW

67 NORTH MAIN STREET
WEST HARTFORD, CT 06107

TELEPHONE: 860.521.2806
FACSIMILE: 860.521.9491

January 15, 2024

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
450 Main Street
Hartford, CT 06103

Dear Judge Nagala:

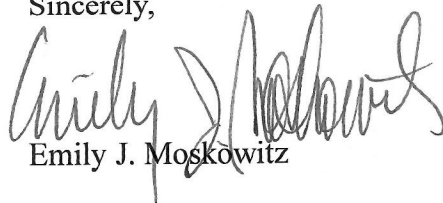
I am writing in support of Dr. Michael Pines. I have known Dr. Pines for over thirty years, both personally and professionally. For the past thirty five years I have been a practicing family attorney. I represent children in cases when their parents are going through the process of divorce. I initially met Dr. Pines in his professional capacity. He was one of the very respected psychologists that I would recommend children to see. Dr. Pines also performed custody and psychological evaluations for the Court to aid it in its decisions regarding children. I always found Dr. Pines to be fair, compassionate and caring. He was very thorough, thoughtful and insightful when making reports to the Court. In addition, the children that he treated were very fond of him and seemed to grow and adapt well under his care. His integrity in his work as a psychologist was beyond reproach.

I also have a personal relationship with Dr. Pines, his wife and his son. They have been to my home for holidays, dinners, parties and other events. My husband and I have been to their home, as well, for holidays, parties and celebrations. I have watched their son grow into a caring and compassionate young man, much like his father. Michael is a very loving and gentle parent, who has guided his son in ways that have made him a confident and well-balanced adult, who is

a pleasure to be around. Michael takes the same approach to his patients, treating them in ways that help them to become healthy adults.

I was astonished when Michel told me about his legal issues. It seems so out of character for the person I have come to know over all these years. I know that he regrets what he has done and is willing to do whatever is necessary to compensate the government and offer service to the community, in an effort to rehabilitate himself. I strongly support Michael in that and hope that the Court can allow him to continue contributing to the community in ways that are beneficial to everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Emily J. Moskowitz".

Emily J. Moskowitz

Christopher J. Hug
307 Littleton Quarter
Williamsburg, Virginia 23185

January 26, 2024

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Courthouse
450 Main Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

Re: Michael Pines, PhD

Dear Judge Nagala:

My name is Christopher J. Hug. Until recently, I resided solely in Simsbury, Connecticut. On December 31, 2023, I retired from the full-time practice of law after more than 34 years. I am in the process of establishing residency in Virginia, though I still have significant activity and contact in Connecticut. During my years practicing full-time, I was a civil trial lawyer. I still practice part-time as an attorney and advisor for a specific ethics Council established under the laws of the state of Connecticut. (Despite being a lawyer, I must candidly admit that I know nothing of criminal law or the sentencing guidelines, so please excuse this letter to the extent it requests something you simply cannot do because of other consideration/requirements.)

I have known Michael since approximately 2002. We met through our spouses, who exercised at the same gym. Michael and I became fast friends. We socialized at dinners, attended events together, vacationed together, and played a fair amount of golf together, activities which continued until my recent move to Virginia. I am hopeful that Michael and his spouse, Gina, will be visiting us soon here in Virginia so we can show them the historic sites and treat them to great food, some of which I hope to cook myself.

I would describe my friendship with Michael as “deep.” By that I mean, we often took long walks and discussed moving personal issues then going on in our lives. I remember we spent several long New Year’s holidays at Michael’s parent’s home in Long Beach Island, New Jersey. Michael and I would take our annual New Year’s Eve walk around the frigid island sharing our life, our highs and our lows. At one point, our friendship was so close that he named me as guardian for his son, should something happen to Michael and Gina. In fact, I remember giving him an embrace after one of these heart-to-heart talks and referred to him as “my brother”. We were/are, that close.

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala

Re: Michael Pines, PhD

January 26, 2024

During the friendship, Michael and I occasionally discuss our work. I would discuss the latest litigation that vexed me, and he likewise would discuss challenging cases, always taking effort to preserve confidentiality. I have a sense he truly cared about his patients. It was not uncommon during a golf game for Michael to skip a hole to take a call or text from one of his troubled patients. He never complained about such incidents. We also discussed his various work changes. For example, in addition to his private practice, he considered, and eventually accepted, an assignment to work part-time with some of the more troubled kids at a private high school. During our talks, we also discussed the “business” side of his practice. That is, how he kept notes, his expert appearances, how he billed and, of course, hourly rates, a topic both lawyers and psychologists share an interest.

Of course, one topic often discussed was parenting. I have three children and they presented constant parenting challenges. Michael was always a good ear. Michael too expressed his joys and frustrations of parenting, and we often discussed our children and their challenges as they grew. He cared not only about his own child, but my children too, for which I am grateful.

Since the first we met, Michael remarked how he loved what he did and wanted to continue doing this well past the usual retirement age. He always took great pleasure in helping others, particularly children. Never griped once about how his demanding practice interfered with the rest of his life.

In December 2023, Michael called me and set up an in-person meeting. His tone was serious, and I feared he was to tell me he was gravely ill. He disclosed to me his current legal troubles. He made no excuses for his behavior and was clearly ashamed of his lapse in judgment. My first reaction was one of relief that my friend was not gravely ill. My second reaction was one of complete surprise because I just did not see this as behavior consistent with the person I have known for more than 20 years. We are quite close, and I never witnessed any moral lapse or deceit in all the years I have known him. The conduct he described just did not seem to be “Michael” as I knew him.

As his friend, I did and still do believe in Michael’s overall goodness. He is still my friend. But he did a bad thing. He knows this. I know this – and I candidly let him know it, as only a close friend can say.

I must admit, I am a bit of a skeptic when it comes to these things. When I hear of others suddenly being remorseful for their bad acts, my “phony” meter rings. In this case, I considered whether Michael was remorseful because he did a very bad thing, or because he was caught. But I have looked into his eyes, observed his mannerisms, expressions, and body language as he tearfully detailed his conduct, and I was convinced he was truly

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala

Re: Michael Pines, PhD

January 26, 2024

remorseful, deeply embarrassed by his conduct and ashamed of his behavior. He is not a phony and now feigning remorse.

I do not mean to diminish the seriousness of Michael's offenses and acknowledge the societal need not just for punishment, but deterrence. Yet, I write this letter to ask that although you must punish my friend and take action that deters others, please do not impose any incarceration for Michael. First, Michael's occupation (not to mention reputation) as a psychologist is over. It has been his identity, and an occupation he has taken pride in. By all accounts, this serious lapse in judgment did not impact the care and treatment of any of Michael's patients. He is a serious therapist and truly wanted to help others struggling psychologically, often children. I hope that his many years of good therapy is one factor Your Honor may consider. However, once this is publicly known, Michael cannot reasonably expect to practice again, although I think that will be a loss to his patients and profession. He will likely face licensure termination as well. Thus, the likelihood of repetition of this offense, or the need to protect the public, is not really a factor.

Second, Michael is in his mid-70s. He is on high blood pressure medication and has hearing issues. At least these are the ailments known to me. The rigors of prison life will likely adversely impact his health. Thus, from a compassionate standpoint, committing him to incarceration will be felt more harshly than perhaps younger offenders.

Third, this was a financial offense and financial restitution and/or fines seem more appropriate, justified, and should be sufficient (with additional public service commitment and probation) to deter others from engaging in similar conduct.

Fourth, I urge you to consider allowing Michael to engage in public service in lieu of incarceration, using his skills with troubled children to good use. In this way, the government will have its punishment and the community will have a much-needed service.

Finally, while I must acknowledge that it is Michael's bad conduct that has created this situation, I ask that you give some consideration to the impact on the innocent family members (Gina, Dru and Michael's elderly mother) in this matter and the impact incarceration will have on them.)

Although I prodded Michael to tell me "why" he engaged in this aberrant behavior, he was at a loss to explain it, but was and is committed to personal improvement and discover what led him to commit these offenses. I sincerely believe he is committed to his reformation, and I expect that in future long walks, Michael and I will be discussing this again.

In closing, I recognize that your role is a difficult one and that there are many things to consider in imposing sentencing, including the guidelines and the need for

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala

Re: Michael Pines, PhD

January 26, 2024

fairness/consistency generally. It is my hope that this letter will help persuade you to be merciful and, thus, I make this plea for Michael.

Respectfully submitted,

Christopher J. Hug

Christopher J. Hug

CATHY CHALMERS, MA, LPC, NCC, LMFT

*Child, Adolescent & Family Therapies
Adoptive Home Studies
Court Services*

*10820 W. 700 Rd.
Hulbert, Oklahoma 74441
(918) 637-4678*

January 12, 2024

The Honorable Sarah V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Courthouse
450 Main Street
Hartford, Connecticut. 06103

Re: Michael Pines, Ph.D, P.C.

Dear Judge Nagala,

I write to you as a friend and colleague of Dr. Michael Pines. I have known Dr. Pines for 35 years, and although geographically distant, we have maintained ongoing communication throughout this time. By way of introduction, I was asked to provide you information regarding my personal and professional background. I am a resident of Oklahoma and an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation. I am a Licensed Professional Counselor (Oklahoma LPC #414; 1986); Nationally Certified Counselor, (Board Certification #21639; 1988); and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (Oklahoma LMFT #72, 1991). I currently work part-time conducting adoption home studies. I spent my career working as an expert witness in court regarding issues including child development, attachment, trauma and the Indian Child Welfare Act.

I also worked for many years with Connected Kids, a non-profit in Tulsa, Oklahoma, including as its Executive Director. Connected Kids trains school, hospital, parent/caregivers and interested others regarding the effects of trauma, active interventions and positive paths for recovery of developmental skills associated with trauma. I have previously worked in both inpatient hospitals and residential treatment centers and multi-disciplinary private practices with psychiatrists, developmental pediatricians, psychologists and a myriad of experientially based art therapists: music therapists, dance movement therapists, occupational and recreational therapists. I have co-authored a book with Dr. Barbara Sorrels, titled *"Nurturing Healthy Attachment: Building Parent-Child Connections to Last a Lifetime"*.

I first met Dr. Pines at a conference in Miami, Florida in the late 1980's. Our meeting eventuated in 35 attendees forming a national organization, ATTACH, Association for the Training on Trauma and Attachment in Children, which has become an international organization. As founding members, Dr. Pines and I served together on the original Board of Directors from 1990 -1996. Dr. Pines was the third President of the organization and I served as Secretary/Treasurer from 1995-1996. We were both

Awarded Lifetime Memberships in 2013, and now serve in an Advisory Board capacity to ATTACH.

Meeting Dr. Pines originally as colleagues, a group of us became friends, knowing one another's families and staying connected in consulting on cases, writing articles together, meeting at what started as quarterly meetings with ATTACH, to eventually seeing one another at annual conferences. Neither of us has attended the annual conference consistently over the past 5 years as we are both slowing down in our professional lives.

Having met Michael from the birth of my first child, now age 33, he became well acquainted with my mother, who was my babysitter during conferences, and my children, whom he played with and with whom he subsequently developed relationships. Because Michael and I both served as conference organizers chairing the ATTACH conference in our respective hometowns, we have been in one another's homes to enjoy family time together. My daughter, at age five, after our time with Michael and out of the blue at dinner once said, "Everyone who likes Michael Pines raise your hand!". He made quite the impression playing with her and we have subsequently laughed about this incident over the years. I have met Michael's wife, Gina, and son, Drue, on several occasions, as well as his 90+ year old mother and aunt. Sharing dinner with Michael, along with his mother, was also special, as Michael has always spoken of the importance of their relationship, his consistent care for and contact with his mother. Michael was a support to me when my mother was diagnosed with cancer and upon her subsequent death and we have kept in contact, sharing our personal family and professional milestones.

I have always experienced Michael as professional in every way, with good personal boundaries and a character exemplifying service and empathy for others. He has displayed commitment both professionally in his community, as well as personally to his family. I have watched him lift up and cheer on our colleagues at ATTACH, being one of the first to reach out to others when they have had personal health or other setbacks.

I have known him over the course of three decades to be a committed mental health professional, caring deeply for the family and children he has served. Due to geographic distance, I have never practiced with him day to day. That said, I consider the conduct he engaged in to be out of character from the person I know.

I have witnessed Dr. Pines to be a responsible, caring and contributing member of our profession over these 35 years. Thank you for the opportunity to provide my observations in this regard.

Respectfully submitted,
Cathy Chalmers, MA, LPC, NCC, LMFT
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12-19-23

Hon. Sarah V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building
United States Courthouse
450 Main Street
Hartford, CT. 06103

Dear Judge Nagala,

I am a licensed psychologist who has been in private practice in CT for the past 42 years. I have treated and evaluated thousands of individuals and families. I have worked in and around the CT court system for over 25 years.

I have known Dr. Michael Pines for over 30 years. We have shared cases, belonged to professional groups together, and discussed many cases in which we were both involved. Dr. Pines has always impressed me with his ability to establish rapport with children who have complex individual and family problems. I know that if he is seeing a child in a case I am working on, that child is in good hands, and will receive appropriate, professional guidance as the case progresses.

I have belonged to the CT Collaborative Divorce Group for the past 15 years, working with attorneys and financial advisors to help couples navigate divorce in a non-adversarial way. We are always looking for talented professionals to join our group. I supported Dr. Pines as a psychologist who would be a good addition to our group. He did join our group, and I have always heard glowing reports from attorneys who worked on divorce cases with him.

Mike shows patience, caring and commitment to his patients. He never gives up on a child or difficult case. His optimism and persistence help children and their families to stick with their counseling when things get difficult.

I have recommended Dr. Pines as a psychologist for many cases in which a child needed solid, professional help and guidance. I was shocked to hear about the problems Michael has had in his billing, and do not find them to be consistent or expected given his professionalism, dedication to his patients, and clinical expertise.

Sincerely,

Bruce Freedman, Ph.D.

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AJ

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1.26.2024

Attention:

The Honorable Sarala V. Nagala
United States District Judge
United States District of Connecticut
Abraham Ribicoff Federal Building United States Courthouse
450 Main Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06103

I am a Board Certified Psychiatrist (Children/Adolescents; Adult; and Addictions) and have lived in Connecticut since 1988 having previously Graduated from Medical School in Cape Town, South Africa and having lived and trained in Psychiatry in England for nearly 10 years prior to moving to the USA.

I have know Michael Pines since 2001 as a colleague working closely with him in regard to over 20 patients who we have followed together, some for years. He is the utmost professional therapist and very caring for the welfare of his patients and does all he can to make sure that they do well under this care. He will go to great lengths to ensure that they do well. He is very easy to work with and does so in a very collaborative way. I am also aware that he is a very caring husband and exemplary father.

The conduct I have heard that he engaged in is out of character and was a total shock to me given the person I know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Allan M. Jacobs". The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Allan M. Jacobs, MD, MRCPsych (*Board Certified in Psychiatry, Addiction Psychiatry & Child/Adolescent Psychiatry*)