

ARKANSAS COURT OF APPEALS

DIVISION I

No. E-17-479

BUTLER FURNITURE DEPOT, INC.
APPELLANT

V.

DIRECTOR, DEPARTMENT OF
WORKFORCE SERVICES AND
VIRGIL SANDERS

APPELLEES

Opinion Delivered: April 25, 2018

APPEAL FROM THE ARKANSAS
BOARD OF REVIEW
[NO. 2017-BR-01423]

DISMISSED

BART F. VIRDEN, Judge

Appellant Butler Furniture Depot, Inc. (Butler Furniture), a corporation, appeals from the Arkansas Board of Review’s November 15, 2017 decision affirming the Arkansas Appeal Tribunal and finding that the claimant, Virgil Sanders, was entitled to benefits because he was discharged from last work for reasons other than misconduct connected with the work. We dismiss due to a lack of jurisdiction.

On December 15, 2017, Butler Furniture filed its petition for appeal with this court. The owner of the corporation, Louis Butler, signed the petition and indicated that he was represented by an attorney, Kevin Rook. However, Mr. Rook did not enter an appearance on behalf of the petitioner until three days later, on December 18, 2017.

It is well-settled law that corporations must be represented by licensed attorneys. *Smithco Invs. of W. Memphis, Inc. v. Morgan Keegan & Co.*, 370 Ark. 477, 261 S.W.3d 454 (2007). Furthermore, our supreme court has held that when a party not licensed to practice

law in this state attempts to represent the interests of others by submitting himself or herself to the jurisdiction of a court, those actions, such as the filing of pleadings, are rendered a nullity. *Id.*

Butler is not an attorney and may not represent the corporation, Butler Furniture Depot, in this case. The petition for appeal was signed by Butler, not the corporation's attorney. Our case law makes it clear that invoking the process of a court of law constitutes the practice of law. *Davis Floor Covering, Inc. v. Dir.*, 2017 Ark. App. 581; *Stephens Prod. Co. v. Bennett*, 2015 Ark. App. 617. Because Butler was practicing law when he signed the petition, the petition is null and void. *Id.* As a result, we lack jurisdiction and dismiss this appeal.

Dismissed.

HARRISON and KLAPPENBACH, JJ., agree.