



Mark DeCoursey <mhdecoursey@gmail.com>

Please Ask for Continuance, Do Not Allow Petition To Go Unanswered

1 message

Carol DeCoursey <cdecoursey@gmail.com>

Mon, Feb 28, 2011 at 7:08 AM

To: "McBride, Ryan" <mcbriider@lanepowell.com>, "Degginger, Grant" <DeggingerG@lanepowell.com>, "Gabel, Andrew J." <GabelA@lanepowell.com>, Mark DeCoursey <mhdecoursey@gmail.com>

On Friday, February 25, we told you we were experiencing a crisis in confidence in Lane Powell and wanted a second pair of eyes to review our legal situation, vis a vis Windermere's petition to the Supreme Court. The issue that needed a "second pair of eyes" concerned the fees and costs provision of the Consumer Protection Act and Windermere's use of litigation attrition warfare, as already explored in this thread. You stated that broaching this subject could not be justified in current law, nor in a possible extension of that law.

Your rationale did not make sense to us. That's why we needed a continuance -- to give a "second pair of eyes" time to review.

We directed you to request a continuance until March 7. You refused.

In refusing to accept our directions, it is apparent that you are now attempting take control of this lawsuit.

We remind you of the letter dated December 30, 2008, in which Lane Powell asked us to pay them \$200,000 from a settlement of \$270,000. In return, Lane Powell assured us that "equal justice under law" would not be impeded by Windermere's attempt to prevail through the power of the purse. Lane Powell, referring to the awards won in 2008, agreed to continue to assist us "regarding possible appeals with regard to the same as necessary to prevail in or retain the awards discussed."

In our view, you are not abiding by your agreements. What might be the explanation? Let us turn to Lane Powell for a possible explanation.

Lane Powell broaches the subject of conflict of interest in a forthright manner. Its retainer agreement recognizes that conflicts of interest can develop. Our Retainer Agreement with your firm, dated September 19, 2007, under the subsection "Conflicts," states in part:

"We have examined our internal data to determine whether any conflicts of interest exist that would preclude us from representing you, and have found no such conflicts . . . Because circumstances change, both we and you must be continually alert to the development of additional information that may give rise to such a conflict . . ."

Now, consider the following:

* Shortly after the trial victory in 2008, we were in the Lane Powell offices talking to Grant Degginger. We said to Grant words to this effect: "Grant, this wonderful victory will open up a whole new line of business for Lane Powell!" Grant did not smile. He said words to this effect: "No, it won't. This may not be at all good for Lane Powell."

Why would such a fine victory in the defense of our home and our rights under the Consumer Protection Act not be good for a large law firm? We now realize the possible significance of Lane Powell's representation of large corporations. We wonder if a vigorous representation of CPA clients and presentation of arguments that might result in the strengthening of the CPA's effectiveness would conflict

with the interests of that corporate client base?

* We wonder if Lane Powell represents parties who are being sued, or who may be sued, under the CPA? We wonder whether the vigorous defense of our CPA rights to fees and costs (in conformity with the liberal construction of the CPA laid down by the Legislature), might provide a conflict for you, and might explain your refusal to vigorously defend our awards?

* Lane Powell may itself be employing litigation attrition warfare against the opponents of its clients, and thus does not want judicial discouragement of this practice.

* Grant Degginger is a city councilman for the city of Bellevue, and for several years, served as its Mayor. Doubtless Grant's affiliation with Lane Powell is known to many in politics. Grant seems to be calling the shots and actively making legal decisions, yet he his not named in our filings.

We wonder if a vigorous representation of CPA clients and an aggressive prosecution of their rights would conflict with any of the Bellevue political power bases, particularly in the real estate/construction/banking/development community? We wonder if this would affect Lane Powell's vigor in defending our CPA awards, or be responsible for any decision that would strengthen the CPA's application in society? And we wonder if the City of Bellevue is employing litigation attrition warfare against its legal opponents?

* We recall a visit we made to Lane Powell and meeting Dennis Strasser. When we complained about Windermere's use of litigation attrition warfare, Mr. Stasser defended Windermere, stating of their lawyers, "They are just doing their jobs." Mr. Strasser was surely indicating he would do the same in their position.

* Lane Powell has recently invoiced us for \$350,000. We understand LP would like to get paid and seeks the earliest possible resolution of the matter. We also understand that Lane Powell intends to make up the fee/costs shortfall in the awards by cutting into our damages award. While this may be in LP's interest, it is not such a good result for us. Significantly, LP refuses to take action that might remedy the fee/cost shortfall in the courts, insisting that it is not in our best interests to do so. Instead, Lane Powell recommends a completely ineffectual action instead -- that we tell the Legislature of the problem.

We are not suggesting anyone is doing anything wrong. We are just scratching our heads and looking for answers that are consistent with the facts.

That's why we want a "second pair of eyes." We are in the process of asking other counsel to look into our situation. Surely you don't object. We believe that is in our best interests, and yours, that this be done. We would like to find a realistic solution for all, so that we can all move on.

Therefore, we direct you once more to seek a continuance. Ask the court to give us until close of business, March 11.

We don't mind if you tell the court what is going on. The Supremes are grown-ups and surely know that, in litigation, "stuff" happens, and sometimes the "stuff" needs to be sorted out.

Whenever we've called the Supreme Court, they've seemed like real nice folks.

If you intend to disregard these instructions, under no circumstances should you allow Windermere's petition to the Supreme Court to go unanswered.

Carol & Mark

