



CIVIL LAWSUIT AGAINST CHEYENNE ATTORNEY CLOSE TO BEING SETTLED



News Wire

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CHEYENNE -- One of two malpractice lawsuits against a Cheyenne divorce attorney is in the process of being settled.

The civil case against Robert Hampe was expected to go to trial Monday.

Hampe is being sued by two former clients who alleged Hampe's employee or partner, Charles W. Rawson, was not licensed to practice law in Wyoming because he was disbarred in New Mexico.

Sandra Vickrey of Cedaredge, Colo., and Jessalyn M. Nicklas of Palatine, Ill., said Rawson represented them in divorce and child custody proceedings on behalf of Hampe, but they were billed for the services of an attorney.

The two are seeking \$700,000 or more in compensatory damages, the cost of the lawsuit and punitive damages, which would have been determined by a jury if Hampe was found liable.

The reasons for the settlement are unknown. Curtis B. Buchhammer, Hampe's attorney, was not available for comment Monday. Vickrey and Nicklas' attorney, Steve Aron, said he wouldn't comment until an agreement has been reached.

In early April, Hampe's attorney filed a motion requesting a change of venue and a continuance. In another motion, Buchhammer asked the court to prohibit the media from further contact with "any party, counsel, or potential witnesses in this matter."

U.S. District Court Judge Alan Johnson denied the motions last week in a pretrial conference hearing.

Hampe began receiving media attention after a Cheyenne woman, Janis G. Vandehei, filed a suit against him in February.

Vandehei claims Hampe breached a legal representation agreement to provide competent and proper legal services. Investigations of Hampe revealed other instances in which he had been collecting money from clients through an unlicensed collection agency.

Hampe's ex-wife, Sharon K. Eskam, has said that Hampe opened the collection agency, Sharon E-H Systems, in her name without her permission.

Hampe is also linked to Rawson, who recently claimed he's the head of Sharon E-H Systems.

Although Hampe has said he has no connections with Rawson, Rawson has an office in Hampe's law office building in downtown Cheyenne.

Dana Biebersmith

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