



ATTORNEY SETTLES SUIT



News Wire

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CHEYENNE -- A local divorce attorney will pay \$231,000 to a former client as part of an out-of-court malpractice lawsuit settlement.

Rather than go to trial, Robert Hampe agreed earlier this month to pay the money to Sandra Nicklas Vickrey.

U.S. District Court Judge Clarence Brimmer granted the settlement on May 10.

Vickrey, of Cedaredge, Colo., filed the suit on June 24, 1998. She alleged that after hiring Hampe to represent her in a custody battle, Hampe's employee or partner, Charles Rawson, represented her instead.

Rawson, who was disbarred by the New Mexico Supreme Court in May 1992, wasn't licensed to represent clients in court. Vickrey also alleged that Hampe billed her for the services of an attorney.

Although Vickrey received far less than the \$700,000 she was seeking in compensatory damages, her attorney, Steve Aron, said she's relieved the case has been resolved.

"She's still angry about the whole thing," Aron said. "To an extent, she can feel successful for winning the case, but she still doesn't have the custody of her children."

These types of cases are always a devastating experience, Aron said. The legal system is about due process, he said. If Vickrey had had a fair hearing in her custody battle, he said, maybe the result of her getting her children would be different.

One good thing that has come out of the settlement, Aron said, is some new information Vickrey received from Hampe. Aron couldn't talk about the details, but he said it could help her get custody of her children.

Hampe, Vickrey and Curtis Buchhamer, Hampe's attorney, were not available for comment.

Hampe is facing another lawsuit in Laramie County District Court.

Janis G. Vandehei of Cheyenne filed a malpractice 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 LLC, in her name and without her permission.

Hampe is also linked to Rawson, who has claimed he's the head of Sharon E-H Systems. Although Hampe has said he has no connections with Rawson, Rawson's office was located in Hampe's law office building.

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