



GPM Attorneys Abramson, Anderson Help Client Secure Inheritance

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MINNEAPOLIS (May 14, 2015) - Norman Abramson and Joy Anderson recently helped two pro bono clients secure a portion of the inheritance their father wanted them to have, which was being denied to them by their sister. The story starts with a father who owned a building in Uptown Minneapolis. Not willing to use a lawyer, but wanting to keep the building in the family, the father quitclaimed the property to one of the daughters (later, the defendant in the lawsuit) with the understanding that she would hold it for the benefit of herself and her sisters. After the father died, however, the defendant became angry with her sisters and her nephew, who operated a bar in the building. To punish her sisters, the defendant claimed her sisters had no rights in the building or any proceeds it generated. She also attempted to evict one of the sisters—a disabled woman suffering from a brain injury—who was living in the upstairs apartment at the time. The sisters did not have any money to hire an attorney to assert their ownership interests.

Abramson took the case, and on behalf of the sisters, sued the defendant to impose a constructive trust in the building for the benefit of all three sisters, relying on text messages in which the defendant acknowledged that the building was the sisters' inheritance. GPM also successfully put the eviction on hold until the sisters' claims of ownership could be resolved. After GPM compelled the production of e-discovery and avoided summary judgment, the case settled on the morning of trial. The defendant agreed to pay a substantial settlement to her sisters. On the due date for payment, however, the defendant defaulted. GPM had to creatively pursue payment after the defendant moved the building out of her own name and into an LLC. After bringing motion for charging order, convincing the registrar's office to record the charging order, and filing a motion for contempt of court, the defendant finally paid the amount owed, plus interest and some attorney's fees.

Gray Plant Mooty is deeply committed to community service. Read more about the firm's pro bono work.