

Jo Ann Orlandi
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February 28, 2012

Deborah Blanchard, Administrator
Joint Committee on Judiciary
Room 2500, Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Ms. Blanchard:

Please accept this letter as my testimony at the hearing on the reappointment of Judge Daniel Shaban.

As the widow of William Orlandi, President of Bristol Heights LLC, I respectfully request that my written testimony be submitted at the reappointment hearing of Judge Shaban.

While it would be easier, and far less stressful personally, to put the Chicago Title Insurance vs. Bristol Heights LLC case in a remote region of my consciousness, that is not an option. It is no more an option for me to be silent at this hearing, than it was for my late husband to concede defeat to a powerful and unethical title company. This is a company that did not properly perform the job for which they were hired, and when confronted, made the decision to overwhelm us with their legal and financial resources.

The toll, both emotional and financial, that this case took on my husband, myself, our business partners, investors, and last but not least, our legal team, is incalculable. Regrettably, I am unable to deliver this statement in person. That reality is yet another piece of the collateral damage wreaked by Judge Shaban's reckless decision.

I am not an attorney, so it is appropriate that I leave the dissection of how Judge Shaban ignored the facts and law in this case to our counsel. However, I lived up close and personal through the entire "back taxes" debacle. When given no other choice, the taxes were paid UNDER PROTEST. Bill continued battling that injustice until his death, refusing numerous settlement offers from Chicago Title. Incredibly, only a matter of days before the trial was to commence, more offers of settlement arrived, each more insulting than the last. As Bill most certainly would have done, our counsel was instructed to reject these in kind, as well.

Thankfully, I was able to attend the trial, just as I would have accompanied my husband had he lived. In spite of the rocky road to the courtroom, I was still optimistic that justice would prevail. When the key witness for Chicago Title leaned forward from the witness stand to ask her counsel if she had answered correctly, and Judge Shaban caught her doing so, warning her counsel not to respond, our hopes for fair play rose. We were wrong.

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In addition to the previously mentioned participants whose lives were negatively impacted by the case and resulting decision, our many family members and friends who were aware of our ordeal were also confident that the facts and law ultimately could not be ignored. They were wrong. The ramifications of Judge Shaban's method of decision making in this case extends to all of them, and to all with whom they may discuss it.

It bears relating that my husband came home one day and told me how he had been discussing the case with someone, and discovered, through this conversation, that our opposing attorney, Ted O' Hanlon, was the spouse of Connecticut's Chief Justice. He became convinced, that at the very least, favoritism was shown towards our opponent. This was after our case was postponed 10 months, and then transferred without our ability to object. Even after the delay, Judge Shaban would not schedule trial for an open week in Nov. 2010, but instead, accommodated Atty. O'Hanlon's request for a 2011 trial. Then, after all was said and done, he chose to ignore the law that interprets insurance policies.

In contemplating this testimony, I realized I felt that to the extent that there are "victims" in civil law, I am a victim of Judge Shaban's refusal, for reasons known only to him, to honor the law. As jaded as most adults become over time and experience, we still hold on to the notion that if we must avail ourselves of the court system, once the facts are presented, the law will be applied to them. For those who will find themselves in such a situation in the future, they deserve better than Judge Shaban.

I welcome and encourage any members of the Committee to contact me at the phone number below with any questions.

Sincerely,

Jo Ann Orlandi



A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Jo Ann Orlandi".

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