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Jury awards \$1.18 million verdict for Beasley Allen plaintiff in business fraud case

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A Charleston County jury awarded \$1,189,408 to Plaintiff Clifford Hansen, after concluding he had been excluded by advisors from a business transaction he originally developed

MONTGOMERY, ALA. (March 22, 2011) - A Charleston County, South Carolina, jury awarded \$1,189,408 to Plaintiff Clifford Hansen after determining he had been unfairly excluded in a business purchase that he had personally developed. The jury held defendant, Beechwood Development Group of South Carolina, LLC, accountable for the investment Mr. Hansen made in developing plans to purchase Hickory Springs Water Company, which bottles and distributes drinking water for retail and wholesale customers. The defendants eventually purchased the business and assets of the company to the exclusion of the plaintiff.

Beasley Allen attorney William E. Hopkins, Jr., represented the Plaintiff. He presented evidence that Mr. Hansen invested considerable time and money in the development of the planned purchase, including performing due diligence and paying engineers for hydrology studies of the natural springs used by the bottled water facility. He then showed the jury that the defendants wrongfully converted and retained crucial information provided by or prepared based on information from Mr. Hansen in order to acquire Hickory Springs Water Company and its assets without including him.

"Clifford Hansen grew up working in two water bottling businesses run by his father. Clifford's dream was to own his own water company one day, which he shared with his father before his tragic premature death due to cancer," Hopkins said. "Unfortunately, Clifford's dream was stolen from him by some greedy businessmen who utilized Clifford's own hard work and due diligence to purchase this water company to his exclusion. We are thankful the Charleston County jury, which deliberated over 7 hours, did not let this injustice go unpunished. While Clifford still does not have his dream, he has some vindication."

This case was tried in the Court of Common Pleas for the 9th Judicial Circuit, State of South Carolina, County of Charleston. Case name Clifford Hansen v. Fields Company, LLC; Beechwood Advisory Group, Inc.; Beechwood Development Group of South Carolina, LLC and Beechwood Development Group, Inc. Case number 09-CP-10-3333.

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