



**DOUGLAS  
HAUN  
HEIDEMANN<sup>PC</sup>**

## QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER - FALL 2018

### DHH win sends strong message about elder abuse, individual rights

A Polk County jury recently awarded more than \$114,000 in damages in a civil case filed by attorney Nathan Duncan of Douglas, Haun & Heidemann, on behalf of Mickael Williams, Walnut Grove against Terry Dale Roberts of Independence, MO. Roberts was represented by attorney Doug Parker, Springfield. Circuit Judge Michael O. Hendrickson presided over the two-day jury trial in Bolivar.

In June 2015, while Williams was hospitalized, Roberts removed three truckloads of Williams' belongings from his home in Polk County and



transported them to Independence without Williams' knowledge or consent. Also, before Williams' hospitalization, Williams and Roberts agreed that Williams would trade a 40-acre farm in Cedar County for Roberts restoring a collectible 1956 Ford Victoria that belonged to

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### DHH Partner Helps with Benefit for Siarra Taylor

On August 3rd, DHH participated in a benefit auction and dinner for the family of Siarra Taylor, a 16 year old girl who died in an ATV accident. The dinner/auction was held at Main Street Baptist Church in Greenfield, MO. Siarra passed away Friday, July 27th from injuries she sustained during a tragic accident. She would have been a sophomore at Greenfield High School this year and was looking forward to being a



Siarra Taylor

Wildcat cheerleader. The community came together to raise funds for Siarra's family to cover funeral costs and other needs. DHH Partner Craig Heidemann provided his services as the auctioneer at the event which raised over \$9,000. Many area community members supplied their best pies, cobblers, cakes, and other baked goods and items to help with the fundraiser. The benefit was catered by Big D's BBQ of Everton.

#### OFFICES AT:

111 W. Broadway  
PO Box 117  
Bolivar, MO 65613  
and  
901 E. St. Louis, Ste. 1200  
Springfield, MO 65806

417-326-5261  
800-743-5728  
Fax: 417-326-2845

[www.dhhlawfirm.com](http://www.dhhlawfirm.com)  
Find us on Facebook

#### ATTORNEYS:

Kerry D. Douglas  
Verna L. Haun  
Craig R. Heidemann  
K. Patrick Douglas  
Donald M. Brown  
Nathan A. Duncan  
Nickolas W. Allen  
Kenneth A. Beck  
Justin E. Stanek  
John W. Kallenbach  
Ted L. Tinsman  
Jordyn M. Hill  
Jason D. Smith

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Williams. Williams deeded over the real estate, but Roberts never restored the vehicle. Roberts returned some of Williams property after he was released from the hospital, but a large number of items remained missing.

“This case was purely a matter of right versus wrong,” said Duncan. “We had a younger individual – Mr. Roberts, the nephew of Mr. Williams – taking advantage of his older uncle. It truly bordered on elder abuse.”

The 12-person jury awarded Williams \$19,000 for the property loss, \$75,800 for the value of the lost real estate, and in a rare move, levied \$20,000 in punitive damages. “Not often do you see punitive damages awarded in a case such as this,” said Duncan. “The purposes of punitive damages are to punish the defendant for fraud-like misconduct and to send a

message to the defendant and others to deter them from similar behavior in the future. Mr. Roberts had an utter disregard to the rights of his uncle.” Duncan said many punitive damages cases involve injured parties seeking damages from companies that have produced allegedly defective or unsafe products. “Clearly, the message this jury sent was that all individuals have rights, regardless of their age, living conditions, mental capacity, physical health or financial situation,” said Duncan. “It was just wrong what happened to Mr. Williams. We were glad to obtain justice for him.”



Nathan Duncan

## DHH Staff Participates in Bolivar High School's Morning Welcome to Students Program



*Above and left - DHH staff spent a morning welcoming Bolivar High School students to school. Bolivar area businesses can sign up to participate in the program. DHH staff held encouraging signs, spoke with the kids and distributed highlighters as a welcome gift.*

