

November 2021

Dear Friend:

When you hear the word “guardian,” what leaps to mind?

If you’re like most people, the word conjures feelings of safety. A guardian is an angel...your protector...someone who defends you.

For many SeniorLAW Center clients, the word means something completely, often horrifyingly different.

You see, guardians are supposed to be loved ones or professionals who care for you, have your interests in mind, keep you safe in your later years...when you need that helping hand most.

But not for 79-year-old Joseph, a SeniorLAW Center client. After he received treatment for a blood clot, his hospital sent him to a local rehab facility. While there, Joseph had no therapy, no services. Just a bed and three meals a day.

On his own, Joseph regained his strength and asked to go home. But the facility refused to let him go. Why? Because the rehab doctor said he was “incapacitated.” They used this diagnosis to apply for guardianship.

But Joseph was just fine. Eventually he was allowed to leave. But the rehab facility continued to pursue guardianship...we believe to get paid from Medicaid for Joseph’s stay.

Can you imagine...sacrificing someone’s independence for money?

That’s when Joseph called us for help. We got him a second opinion. Thanks to our efforts, their attorney withdrew the guardianship petition before the first hearing.

Today, we are helping Joseph arrange his affairs to ensure he never has to go through this nightmare again.

Guardianship is receiving a lot of attention these days. You may have noticed on the envelope a printed question: “What do SeniorLAW Center and Britney Spears have in common?”

We are both dedicated to shining a spotlight on the nationwide scourge of guardianship abuse, neglect, and exploitation. In tones of heartbreak, frustration, and anger, Britney Spears has described in detail her powerlessness to control nearly every aspect of her life.

Whether you're a pop icon embroiled in a 13-year guardianship saga, or our client Joseph who just wants to live in safety and peace, this issue is finally receiving the attention it demands.

With your help, SeniorLAW Center has been at the forefront of guardianship reform in Pennsylvania. Here's why this is so important.

If a Pennsylvania court deems you "incapacitated" and assigns you a guardian, you may no longer be able to make your own fundamental decisions about your life: like where to live, spend your income, sell your property. Sometimes, you can't even choose which friends and family members to visit.

SeniorLAW Center is pleased to tell you we already have made great strides in reducing guardianship abuse. With your support, we worked with courts, legislators, and advocates to help develop and share information about the Guardianship Tracking System, which standardizes guardianship filing and reporting state-wide.

In addition, because of our work with partners supported by donors like you, guardians are now required to submit a criminal record check from each state in which they have lived over the past five years.

Most recently, SeniorLAW Center participated in the release of the Pennsylvania Guardianship Bench Book, a resource of best practices for judges, attorneys, and other guardianship stakeholders. In addition, this year, we launched new services to represent those facing guardianship abuse, neglect, or exploitation, and educate communities.

It's important to tell you that while there are many excellent, caring guardians, there are still too many who neglect, exploit, even steal from those in their care.

That's why it is so important for those we serve to have a SeniorLAW Center attorney by their side during these difficult times.

Older Pennsylvanians continue to need SeniorLAW Center services. Your support helps not only to prevent guardian abuse, but also unlawful eviction, elder abuse, financial exploitation, homelessness, and poverty.

COVID-19 continues to exacerbate the need for our services. The eviction crisis is still imploding, older people are facing egregious forms of elder abuse and financial exploitation, grandparents raising grandchildren need essential resources in order to raise children who have been abandoned, abused or neglected, and so much more.

Our case load grows larger every year. Your gift of support helps SeniorLAW Center serve more and more older Pennsylvanians when they need us most.

Today, given the countless challenges our clients face, we would be so grateful if you would support SeniorLAW Center with a gift of **\$50, \$75, \$100**...any amount you are able to give.

Thank you again for being there for Pennsylvania's vulnerable seniors. Thank you for believing in SeniorLAW Center.

Very truly yours,



Karen C. Buck
Executive Director

P.S. We thank Joseph for enthusiastically encouraging us to share his story with you today. We will continue to fight tirelessly for all SeniorLAW Center clients when they need us most. ***That's why we need you.***

Make your **tax-deductible gift today** in the enclosed envelope.

Or...go online, to www.seniorlawcenter.org. Look for the "DONATE" button on the top right side of our homepage.

Thank you!