

Seyfarth Shaw Wins Significant Pro Bono Matter for Texas Family

HOUSTON (May 26, 2011) — Leading law firm Seyfarth Shaw LLP is pleased to announce an important pro bono victory before the Texas Supreme Court in a family law matter.

The Court's ruling is a blessing for a family faced with the possibility of losing a child they have cared for since he was one-year old.

The clients took in the now four-year-old just after his mother had abandoned him and his father was unable to care for him. They rescued him from abuse and unspeakable living conditions and over the past four years, he has flourished in their care. They had planned to proceed with formal adoption proceedings.

Out of the blue, however, the boy's biological mother reappeared and asserted that she should have custody of him. Even though she had mistreated, neglected, and ultimately abandoned the child, she claimed that he had been kidnapped from her.

The Seyfarth team defended the parents' right to maintain custody before the Texas Supreme Court. They worked more than 300 hours on the matter, including during the Christmas break, and prepared and filed a response in opposition to the mother's petition for review and also prepared briefing on the merits.

On February 25 the Court denied the mother's petition for review and affirmed the lower court's judgment terminating the mother's parental rights and upholding the client's right to proceed with adoption. On May 20 the Court again sided with our clients and denied the biological mother's petition for rehearing.

The Seyfarth team included partner David Waddell and associates Randy Bruchmiller, Judd Treeman and Steve Shardonofsky. The team was assisted by the client's custodial parent's trial counsel, Ellen Yarrell, and their counsel at the Texas Court of Appeals, Sallee Smyth.

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