

412249-401

Exhibit 1

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Deputy


Sterling G. Senechal III



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412249-401

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS

CANDACE LOUISE CURTIS,
PLAINTIFF

VS.

ANITA KAY BRUNSTING,
AMY RUTH BRUNSTING,
AND DOES 1-100,
DEFENDANTS

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CIVIL ACTION No. 4:12-cv-00592
JUDGE KENNETH M. HOYT

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

MOTION FOR LEAVE TO FILE FIRST AMENDED PETITION

TO THE HONORABLE COURT:

Comes Now, Plaintiff, Candice Louis Curtis and files this Motion for Leave to File First Amended Petition pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 15(a), and in support thereof would respectfully show as follows:

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In light of recently discovered evidence in this case, Plaintiff moves this Court to permit her to file an amended complaint. The proposed amendment asserts an additional legal theory grounded in the same basic facts as the existing complaint, but that will ensure that all parties to be impacted by the ultimate judgment are participants. Moreover, because the claim to be asserted in the amendment appears to be meritorious, it would be in the interests of justice for this claim to be included in the case.

II. BACKGROUND

2. In her Original Petition, Plaintiff brought causes of action against Defendants Anita Brunsting and Amy Brunsting as Co-Trustees of the Brunsting Family Trust, stemming from

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actions they took with regard to the Trust and Trust assets that harmed Plaintiff.

3. Through reviewing the hundreds of documents produced, Plaintiff has discovered that the Qualified Beneficiary Designation and Exercise of Testamentary Power of Appointment ("Modification Documents") executed by Nelva Brunsting after her husband's death improperly attempted to change the terms of the then-irrevocable Trust. Plaintiff now seeks leave to file a Declaratory Judgment Action as to the validity of the Modification Documents.

III. ARGUMENTS AND AUTHORITY

4. Leave to amend the pleadings "shall be freely given when justice so requires." FED. R. CIV. P. 15(a). The United States Supreme Court has long instructed that "this mandate is to be heeded." *Foman v. Davis*, 371 U.S. 178, 183 (1962). The Ninth Circuit, moreover, has stated that the policy of permitting amendments "should be applied with 'extreme liberality.'" *DCD Programs, Ltd. v. Leighton*, 833 F.2d 183, 186 (9th Cir. 1987).
5. Rule 15(a) reinforces one of the fundamental policies underlying the Federal Rules - that pleadings are not an end in themselves, but instead are only a means of helping ensure that each case is decided on its merits. *See* 6 CHARLES ALAN WRIGHT ET AL., *FEDERAL PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE* § 1473, at 521 (2nd ed. 1990). Thus, "if the underlying facts relied upon by a plaintiff may be a proper subject for relief, he ought to be afforded an opportunity to test his claim on the merits." *Foman*, 371 U.S. at 182; *see also Frost v. Perry*, 919 F. Supp. 1459, 1468 (D. Nev. 1996) (stating that Rule 15 should be interpreted "very liberally, in order to permit meritorious actions to go forward, despite inadequacies in the pleadings").
6. Quite appropriately, "courts have not imposed any arbitrary timing restrictions on a party's request for leave to amend and permission has been granted under Rule 15(a) at various

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stages of the litigation: following discovery; after a pretrial conference; . . . when the case is on the trial calendar and has been set for a hearing by the district court; at the beginning, during, and at the close of trial; after a judgment has been entered; and even on remand following an appeal.” 6 CHARLES ALAN WRIGHT ET AL., FEDERAL PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE § 1488, at 652-57 (2d ed. 1990) (citations omitted). Thus, delay - either in seeking to amend or occasioned by an amendment - in itself cannot justify denial of leave to amend. *See, e.g., DCD Programs*, 833 F.2d at 186.

7. Given the liberal policy toward amendments, the burden of demonstrating why leave to amend should not be granted falls squarely on the nonmoving party. *See id.* at 187; Frost, 919 F. Supp. at 1469. In deciding whether the nonmovant has carried this burden, courts commonly consider the following four factors: (1) bad faith or dilatory motive on the part of the movant; (2) undue delay in filing the motion; (3) prejudice to the opposing party; and (4) the futility of the proposed amendment. *See, e.g., Roth v. Marquez*, 942 F.2d 617, 628 (9th Cir. 1991).
8. Plaintiff has not unduly delayed submitting the proposed amendment, as the evidence supporting the claim has only recently come to light. These facts warrant an amendment of the Plaintiff's pleadings.
9. The Defendants would not be unfairly prejudiced by such an amendment, and their counsel has indicated that he is not opposed to our Motion for Leave.
10. Plaintiff therefore seeks leave to file the First Amended Complaint attached hereto as Exhibit “A.” Justice requires that Plaintiff be afforded an opportunity to test the merits of that claim.

IV. PRAYER

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests that the Court (a) grant leave to file the First

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Amended Complaint attached hereto as Exhibit "A," and (b) grant such other and further relief that the Court deems just and appropriate.

Respectfully Submitted,

OSTROM/*Sain*

A limited Liability Partnership

BY: /s/ Jason B. Ostrom

JASON B. OSTROM

(Fed. Id. #33680)

(TBA #24027710)

NICOLE K. SAIN THORNTON

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Houston, Texas 77006

713.863.8891

713.863.1051 (Facsimile)

Attorneys for Plaintiff

CERTIFICATE OF CONFERENCE

The undersigned hereby certifies that he has conferred with opposing counsel and they are unopposed to this motion to amend the complaint.

/s/ Jason B. Ostrom

Jason B. Ostrom

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

The undersigned hereby certifies that service on known Filing Users will be automatically accomplished through the Notice of Electronic Filing. Additionally, this document will be served by copy to any attorney-of-record for those parties in state court litigation.

/s/ Jason B. Ostrom

Jason B. Ostrom

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Exhibit A

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
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CANDACE LOUISE CURTIS,
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VS.

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CIVIL ACTION No. 4:12-CV-00592
JUDGE KENNETH M. HOYT

JURY TRIAL DEMANDED

PLAINTIFF'S FIRST AMENDED PETITION

I. PARTIES

1. Plaintiff, Candice Louis Curtis is a citizen of the State of California.
2. Defendant Anita Kay Brunsting is a citizen of the State of Texas, who has answered and appeared herein.
3. Defendant Amy Ruth Brunsting is a citizen of the State of Texas, who has answered and appeared herein.
4. Necessary Party and involuntary plaintiff is Carl Brunsting, individually and as Executor of the Estate of Nelva Brunsting, who is a citizen of the State of Texas and is expected to waive the issuance of citation. He is being added to effectuate complete relief regarding the claims and to avoid the risk of inconsistent judgments being rendered.
5. Necessary Party is Carole Ann Brunsting, who is a citizen of the State of Texas, and who can be served with citation at 5822 Jason St., Houston, Texas 77074. She is being added to effectuate complete relief regarding the claims and to avoid the risk of inconsistent judgments being rendered.

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II. JURISDICTION AND VENUE

6. This Court had jurisdiction of the state law claims alleged herein pursuant to 28 USC § 1332(a)(1) – 28 USC § 1332(b), and 28 USC § 1332(C)(2) in that this action is between parties who are citizens of different states and the amount in controversy exceeds the sum of \$75,000.00, exclusive of interests and costs. Jurisdiction may be destroyed if all necessary parties are joined.
7. The Res in this matter includes assets belonging to the Brunsting Family Living Trust (“Trust”) and assets belonging to the Estate of Nelva Brunsting, Deceased, under the care and control of Necessary Party Carl Brunsting.

III. NATURE OF ACTION

8. This action arises out of the misappropriate and mismanagement of assets that belonged to Nelva Brunsting during her life and of assets that belonged to the Brunsting Family Trust, and the execution of invalid documents seeking to amend the Brunsting Family Trust.

IV. CAUSES OF ACTION

9. Breach of Fiduciary Duty. Defendants Anita Brunsting and Amy Brunsting are Co-Trustees of the Trust and owed to Plaintiff, Carl Brunsting, and Carole Brunsting, a fiduciary duty, which includes: (1) a duty of loyalty and utmost good faith; (2) a duty of candor; (3) a duty to refrain from self-dealing; (4) a duty to act with integrity of the strictest kind; (5) a duty of fair, honest dealing; and (6) a duty of full disclosure. Defendants have violated this duty by engaging in self-dealing, by failing to disclose the existence of assets to Plaintiff, by failing to account to Plaintiffs for Trust assets and income, by failing to place Plaintiff’s interests ahead of their own, and by making distributions that deviate from the strict language of the Trust. Plaintiff seeks actual and exemplary damages, together with pre- and post-judgment

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interest and costs of court.

10. Fraud. Defendants Anita Brunsting and Amy Brunsting made misrepresentations of material facts with the intent that Plaintiff rely upon them, and Plaintiff did rely upon such misrepresentations to her detriment. Such misrepresentations included statements regarding the Trust, Trust assets, and her right to receive both information and Trust assets. On information and belief, Defendants made fraudulent misrepresentations to Nelva Brunsting upon which she relied to her detriment and to the ultimate detriment of her Estate. Plaintiff seeks actual and exemplary damages, together with pre- and post-judgment interest both on behalf of herself, and on behalf of the Estate of Nelva Brunsting, Deceased.
11. Constructive Fraud. Constructive fraud exists when a breach of a legal or equitable duty occurs that has a tendency to deceive others and violate their confidence. As a result of Defendants' fiduciary relationship with Plaintiff and with Nelva Brunsting, Defendants owed Plaintiff and Nelva Brunsting legal duties. The breaches of the fiduciary duties discussed above and incorporated herein by reference constitute constructive fraud, which caused injury to both Nelva Brunsting's Estate and Plaintiff. Plaintiff seeks actual damages, as well as, punitive damages individually and on behalf of Nelva Brunsting's Estate.
12. Money Had and Received. Defendants have taken money that belongs in equity and good conscience to Plaintiff, and has done so with malice and through fraud. Plaintiff seeks her actual damages, exemplary damages, pre- and post-judgment interest and court costs.
13. Conversion. Defendants have converted assets that belong to Plaintiff as beneficiary of the Brunsting Family Trust, assets that belong to the Brunsting Family Trust, and assets that belonged to Nelva Brunsting and that should be a part of her Estate. Defendants have

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wrongfully and with malice exercised dominion and control over these assets, and has damaged Plaintiff, the Brunsting Family Trust, as well as the Estate of Nelva Brunsting by so doing. Plaintiff seeks actual damages, exemplary damages, pre- and post-judgment interest and court costs, both individually and on behalf of the Decedent's Estate.

14. Tortious Interference with Inheritance Rights. A cause of action for tortious interference with inheritance rights exists when a defendant by fraud, duress, or other tortious means intentionally prevents another from receiving from a third person an inheritance or gift that he would otherwise have received. Defendants herein breached their fiduciary duties and converted funds that would have passed to Plaintiff through the Brunsting Family Trust, and in doing so tortiously interfered with Plaintiff's inheritance rights. Plaintiff seeks actual damages as well as punitive damages.
15. Declaratory Judgment Action. The Brunsting Family Trust was created by Nelva and Elmer Brunsting, and became irrevocable upon the death of Elmer Brunsting. After his death, Nelva executed a Qualified Beneficiary Designation and Exercise of Testamentary Power of Appointment ("Modification Documents"), which attempted to change the terms of the then-irrevocable Trust. Upon information and belief, Nelva did not understand what she was signing when she signed the Modification Documents, and signed them as a result of undue influence and/or duress. Plaintiff seeks a declaration that the Modification Documents are not valid, and further that the *in terrorem* clause contained therein is overly broad, against public policy and not capable of enforcement. Plaintiff further seeks a declaration as to her rights under the Brunsting Family Trust. Plaintiff contends and will show that she has brought her action in good faith.
16. Demand for Accounting. Plaintiff seeks a formal accounting from Defendants in compliance

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with the Texas Property Code.

V. JURY DEMAND

17. Plaintiff hereby makes her demand for a jury trial in this matter.

VI. PRAYER

18. WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED, Plaintiff prays that upon final trial in this matter, she will take judgment for her actual and exemplary damages, actual and exemplary damages will be awarded to the Estate of Nelva Brunsting, that pre- and post-judgment interest and costs of court will be assessed against the Defendants, and that she be granted such other and further relief to which she may show herself justly entitled.

Respectfully Submitted,

OSTROM/*Sain*

A limited Liability Partnership

BY: /s/ Jason B. Ostrom

JASON B. OSTROM

(Fed. Id. #33680)

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Attorneys for Plaintiff

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/s/ Jason B. Ostrom
Jason B. Ostrom

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UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF TEXAS
HOUSTON DIVISION

CANDACE LOUISE CURTIS, *et al*,

Plaintiffs,

VS.

ANITA KAY BRUNSTING, *et al*,

Defendants.

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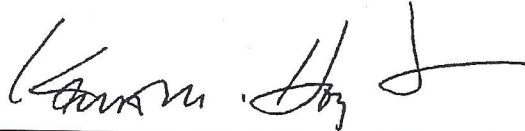
CIVIL ACTION NO. 4:12-CV-592

ORDER GRANTING MOTION FOR LEAVE TO FILE FIRST AMENDED PETITION

On this day, the Court considered the plaintiff's motion for leave to file first amended petition. The Court, having considered the same, is of the opinion and finds that plaintiff's request to amend should be GRANTED.

It is therefore, ORDERED that the plaintiff is hereby granted leave to amend her original petition by filing her first amended petition in its stead.

SIGNED on this 15th day of May, 2014.



Kenneth M. Hoyt
United States District Judge

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