

Attorneys Greg Barnhart and David Sales Battle for Client's Share in Father's Estate

Roger Dean was the father of three daughters: the oldest, Susan "Suzie", the middle, Jane "Janie", and the youngest, Patricia "Patty". Mr. Dean built his fortune by owning and operating 21 automobile dealerships. In addition to his dealerships, Mr. Dean had financial interests in more than 70 companies throughout the United States. At the time of his tumultuous divorce from his wife, Ruth, in 1993,

Mr. Dean's fortune was reported to be more than \$80 million.

Toward the end of his life, Mr. Dean suffered from the late stages of stomach and liver cancer. As a result, he was heavily medicated and incapable of making decisions regarding his estate. On April 3, 1999, Mr. Dean died in his home. He was 83-years-old. *continued on page two*



Janie Dean with her father Roger Dean in 1995.

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Mr. Dean had always planned to leave everything to his three daughters equally. Five months prior to his death, he executed a will and trust which equally divided all his assets among his three daughters. Unfortunately, those plans may have been derailed by some of the people he trusted most. Four days prior to his death, aided by his daughter, Patty, and his attorneys, Mr. Dean purportedly executed an Amendment to his Amended and Restated Revocable Trust Agreement.

The Amendment named Patty the sole trustee of the Trust at the time of Mr. Dean's death. Under the terms of the Amendment, all of the stock in Roger Dean Enterprises was to be distributed to Patty. The Amendment also conveyed bequests to two people unrelated to Mr. Dean, specifically to Mr. Dean's maid and to the son of one of the attorneys who drafted the will and trust. Essentially, Patty would receive all of the assets of Mr. Dean's estate. The effect of the Amendment was devastating to Janie and Suzie.

Janie retained the services of attorneys Greg Barnhart and David Sales, as well as co-counsel Frank Chopin. On July 2, 1999, Janie filed a complaint against her sister, Patty, and her father's attorneys to revoke the Amendment and for interfering with her inheritance rights. Mr. Barnhart and Mr. Sales were able to uncover evidence showing how Patty and the lawyers made radical changes to the Trust. Additionally, Mr. Barnhart and Mr. Sales waded through thousands of documents to determine the true value of Mr. Dean's estate.

On February 4, 2000, after three long days and nights of mediation, Mr. Dean's three daughters were able to come to an amicable and confidential settlement agreement. While the agreement was in the best interest of all three daughters, it is unfortunate that the legacy of Mr. Dean's life has been tainted by such actions. ■