

Weekly

Beverly Hills

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Courier v. Weekly lawsuit dismissed

The *Beverly Hills Courier* dismissed the appeal on their last remaining count yesterday in a lawsuit against *Beverly Hills Weekly* that was brought last year.

“Out of all the cases I’ve handled being a lifelong resident of Beverly Hills this one provided me with a great amount of civic pride and responsibility,” the *Weekly*’s attorney Ronald Richards said. “This is because at the onset of the case it was obvious a local business was the target of an attempt to wipe them out.”

The *Courier* sought thousands of dollars in compensatory damages that they claimed were lost as a result of the *Weekly*’s business practices.

“I am grateful that upon changing ownership the new *Courier*’s owners saw the wisdom in having Beverly Hills served by two newspapers instead of one,” Richards said.

Former *Courier* publisher Clif Smith recently sold the *Courier* to the late Paula Kent Meehan, who passed away in late June. The current trustees of the *Courier* were not involved in the original lawsuit.

“By heading them off at the pass by filing a successful anti SLAPP motion, *Beverly Hills Weekly* was able to show the court the real purpose of the *Courier*’s complaint, which was to drive the *Weekly* out of business so the *Courier* could enjoy a monopoly,” Richards said.

The Los Angeles Superior Court ruled in favor of the *Weekly* in a SLAPP motion (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) last December on two of the three causes of action.

The *Courier* paid an attorneys fee motion of \$40,000 that was awarded to the *Weekly* on Feb. 21. The dismissal does not seek for any other fees and costs in addition to the attorney's fees that were already paid, according to Richards.

"I don't expect our firm's representation to be needed in the future on this matter," Richards said. "However we will always be standing guard to protect the *Weekly*'s first amendment rights as well as any other Beverly Hills business that is ever subjected to the same attack in the future."