



## Serving A Need

I recently had the pleasure to work with a local attorney who went “above and beyond.”

I was contacted by the stepson of an elderly woman living on the west side. He said his stepmother had “cognitive deficiencies” (i.e., early dementia), and he was concerned that she had been ripped off. A detective from the Phoenix Police Department and I met with the woman, who told us she had received a telephone call from what she thought was the utility company, telling her she could save 45 percent on her monthly utility bills. They came to her home the next day, cleaned out her air ducts and charged her several thousand dollars. It was not the utility company but, in fact, a local contractor that installed an air conditioning unit we later learned was far too large for her small home. The company charged her \$7,700. With late fees, she currently owes \$8,200.

To make matters worse, they put a lien on her home, giving them authority to take her house if she did not pay, essentially leaving her homeless.

I sent an e-mail to all members of the Maricopa Elder Abuse Prevention Alliance, which I coordinate, giving them the facts of this case and asking if they knew anything about the contractor. (I have since learned that the Registrar of Contractors has received approximately eight complaints against the company in the past two years. They apparently target elderly and low-income individuals.) In response to my e-mail, attorney Emily Kile contacted me immediately and said she would be more than happy to assist the woman *pro bono*. Emily met with the woman and is still in the process of resolving what is a very complicated case. Because she could not pay the \$8,200, the woman had filed for bankruptcy. In addition, her dementia has created other issues, all of which Emily is attempting to address.

I am truly grateful for the legal representation Emily has provided to the victim, who, without Emily’s assistance, would be in a much worse predicament. It is lawyers like Emily who give the legal profession a good name.

—Greta Mang

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