

**IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE 11<sup>th</sup>  
JUDICIAL CIRCUIT IN AND FOR  
MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**CASE NO.: 2021-15089 CA 01  
COMPLEX BUSINESS LITIGATION**

**In re: Champlain Towers  
South Litigation Collapse**

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**ORDER**

On August 29, 2022, the Court conducted a hearing on counsel's Motion for Attorney's Fees. At the hearing, and in the Court's two subsequent written orders memorializing its rulings, it commended leadership counsel for the outstanding work done in this case on behalf of those who lost loved ones (and property).

The Court was a bit spent going into the August 29<sup>th</sup> hearing. It had just finished five (5) weeks of hearing the damage claims of approximately 80 families, had issued Awards in each case, and had been preparing for the fee hearing.<sup>1</sup> In its preparation, the Court had decided to give particular recognition to three (3) members of the leadership team whose extraordinary contributions were, without any doubt, the *sine qua non* of the outcome achieved here on behalf of the class. In the heat of the moment, the Court – despite its intention to do so – neglected to

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<sup>1</sup> The Court wishes to extend its thanks and gratitude to its longtime judicial assistant, Maria Carbajal Viera, who spent countless hours, with no additional compensation, assisting this Court throughout this case, and in particular during the claims process.

properly acknowledge the work of these three (3) attorneys. That oversight will now be corrected.

### **Rachel Furst**

The Court, on its own initiative, appointed Rachel Furst as co-leader counsel. It did so for one reason, and one reason only: it had witnessed, firsthand, the quality of her work. Despite this being her first lead role in a case of this magnitude, the Court was confident that she was up to the task and that appointing her as co-lead with Mr. Tropin was in the best interest of the putative class. She did not disappoint.

Ms. Furst was emersed in all aspects of this case, including investigating claims, strategizing, managing the team of attorneys that had been assembled, drafting pleadings and, in particular, the Amended Class Action Complaint, negotiating settlements, drafting motions for preliminary and final approval, and handling matters before the Court. As the Court expected, the quality of her work was outstanding. Despite the intense pressure that even the most seasoned lawyer would experience in a case such as this, Ms. Furst did anything and everything necessary to protect the interests of her clients, never wavering or faltering. She served with distinction and has earned the admiration and respect of this Court, her colleagues and those she represented in a time of extreme need.

## **Lea Bucciero**

Ms. Bucciero, together with her partner Ricardo Martinez Cid, served as “lead counsel” to the wrongful death/personal injury sub-class. Her work in this case was extraordinary. Ms. Bucciero took the lead in researching/analyzing the myriad of difficult and complex insurance issues presented, participated in drafting significant pleadings and settlement documents, worked-up and presented her clients’ damages claims, and was instrumental in many other aspects of this case. She was also far more than a “lawyer” to the families that put their trust in her. She was an advisor, confidant and friend who stood with them at every stage of the proceeding, including a number of emotionally difficult claims hearings. The Court commends Ms. Bucciero for her compassion, professionalism and dedication to the cause of her clients. They were extremely fortunate to have her by their side.

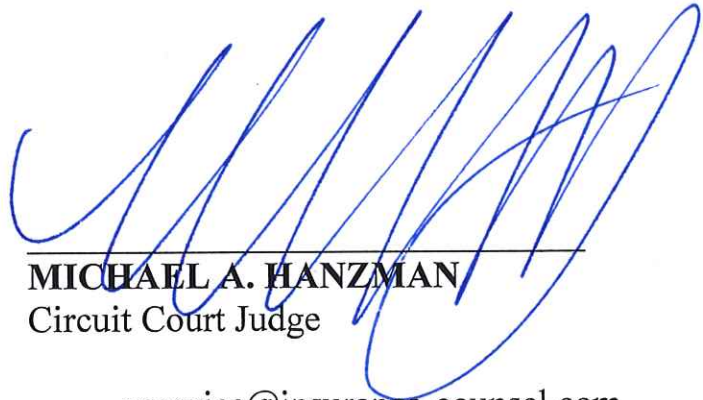
## **Jeff Goodman**

Mr. Goodman is one of the finest construction litigation attorneys that has ever appeared before the Court. His competence and expertise was immediately apparent to everyone involved in this case, and his outstanding work was critical to its success. The Defendants were represented by some of the most talented and formidable construction defect lawyers in the country, including Michael J. Thomas, Esq., Michael K. De Chiara, Esq., and Seth Schimmel, Esq. Mr. Goodman possessed similar experience and skill in complex construction litigation, and without his

talents and expertise this may not have been a “fair fight.” The Plaintiff class was very fortunate to have him as part of the leadership team.

As the Court has said many times, the lawyers in this case, on both sides of the “V,” were the best-of-the-best. But these three (3) attorneys deserve individual recognition for their dedication, competence, and extraordinary work. And the Court would be remiss if it were to close this case without publicly acknowledging them.<sup>2</sup>

**DONE AND ORDERED** in Chambers, at Miami-Dade County, Florida this 31<sup>st</sup> day of August, 2022.



**MICHAEL A. HANZMAN**  
Circuit Court Judge

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<sup>2</sup> The Court also again thanks Judd Rosen, Esq. and Gonzalo Dorta, Esq. for their professionalism in handling what was perhaps the most difficult and sensitive undertaking of counsel – negotiating and resolving the intra class dispute between condominium owners and families who had lost loved ones. But for the competence and sound judgment of these experienced attorneys, that dispute could not have been amicably concluded. On that note, the Court also once again expresses its gratitude to Bruce Greer, Esq., who put his life on hold and masterfully mediated both the Allocation Settlement and the Third-Party Claims. Absent the skill, persistence and dedication exhibited by Mr. Greer, who refused to accept this Court’s offer of well-deserved seven figure compensation, this case would never have been brought to its timely conclusion. The Court thanks him for his extraordinary service, which it knows came at great personal sacrifice.

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