

Law firm sued over forgery by attorney

By Ivan Moreno, Rocky Mountain News
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A prominent Denver law firm is being sued after one of its attorneys forged a federal judge's signature on a legal document.

The forgery allowed one of Faegre & Benson's clients to obtain a loan and pay the firm for work, according to the lawsuit filed Tuesday in U.S District Court in Colorado.

The attorney, Mark W. Fischer, admitted in a two-page letter that on April 25, 2005, that he "fabricated a false document which purported to be an order" signed by Judge Philip -Figa to release a lien against his client's property.

The lien had been entered against Judy Heumann after Infant Swimming Research won a breach-of-contract lawsuit against her.

"I accept full and sole responsibility for any and all improper conduct associated with this matter," Fischer wrote in the letter to federal magistrate Michael E. Hegarty.

Fischer said he asked Heumann to give \$90,000 to his firm to deposit in court as bond for the release of the lien. Fischer said the money was never deposited.

After the lien on her property was released, Heumann obtained a loan from Countrywide Home Loans.

The state Supreme Court suspended Fischer on April 11 and he faces a disciplinary hearing.

Faegre & Benson partner Dave Stark said the firm learned of Fischer's conduct hours before he sent the letter April 9. Fischer resigned the same day.

"What Mr. Fischer described in his letter is inconsistent with the way Faegre & Benson has practiced law for over 100 years," Stark said.

Fischer declined to comment.

The company that sued Heumann is now suing Fischer and Faegre & Benson, saying they "failed to properly supervise Fischer." The suit also names Heumann.

"We believe that she had involvement and had notice of the fabrication of the (order) prior to March 28, 2007, when he found out about the fabricated order," said Douglas Jaffe, an attorney for Infant Swimming Research Inc.

Fischer, in his letter to the court, said Heumann was unaware the signature was forged.

SOURCE: http://www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/local/article/0,1299,DRMN_15_5507528,00.html