

Press Release

Freeborn Secures Verdict of Willful Copyright Infringement on Behalf of Hiller, LLC.

CHICAGO – March 15, 2019 – [Freeborn & Peters LLP](#) is pleased to announce that it has secured a favorable jury verdict for its client, Hiller Plumbing, Heating, Cooling, and Electrical (Hiller), a residential and commercial service provider based in Nashville, Tenn. Defendants were found to have willfully infringed Hiller’s copyright in a proprietary training manual, used to train technicians in customer service.

Hiller was represented at trial by [Jeffrey J. Catalano](#), a partner in Freeborn’s Chicago office, and [Jason P. Stearns](#), a partner in the firm’s Tampa office.

In *Hiller, LLC v. Success Group International Learning Alliance, LLC*, the jury found on March 12 that defendants Success Group International Learning Alliance, LLC (SGILA) and SGILA managing member Rebecca Cassel willfully infringed the copyright in the Hiller Technician’s Guide. The jury deliberated for approximately eight hours before finding in favor of Hiller and rejecting the defendants’ affirmative defenses and intervenor Clockwork IP, LLC’s counts for declaratory judgment and ownership.

Judge Jon Phipps McCalla presided over the case in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Tennessee, Nashville Division. The case, filed April 24, 2017, is MD TN: 3:17-cv-00743.

“At Hiller, we attribute our growth and resulting success to our fundamental values, customer-focused training methods, and service protocols,” remarked Jimmy Hiller, founder and CEO of Hiller. “Therefore, it is critically important to us that our intellectual property, which we worked hard to develop, is protected from infringement by groups that wish to capitalize on the success of others.”

Mr. Catalano, who served as lead trial counsel, echoed Mr. Hiller’s statement: “A key part of Hiller’s successes is its dedication to customer service based on company core values. We are extremely pleased that the jury recognized the originality of the Technician’s Guide and rightfully admonished defendants for their deliberate copying. It is always particularly satisfying when a client is vindicated by a jury of its peers.”

Mr. Catalano acknowledged, “[T]his was a difficult case, presenting more complicated legal issues than the subject matter would suggest. I am tremendously proud of our IP litigation team, which performed admirably throughout, both on paper and in the courtroom.”

Mr. Hiller added, “Mr. Catalano and Mr. Stearns, as well as the entire Freeborn team, were a tremendous asset during these unfortunate circumstances, and worked diligently to present the truth, receiving a favorable outcome for us during these proceedings.”

Defendant Success Group International Learning Alliance, LLC provides training programs to assist contactors in the home services industries to improve and maintain best practices in their business operations. SGILA and its managing member, Ms. Cassel, were represented by Butler Snow.

Intervenor Clockwork IP is a subsidiary of Clockwork Home Services, a franchisor for the Benjamin Franklin® plumbing, Mr. Sparky® electrical, and One Hour Heating and Air Conditioning® franchises. Clockwork was represented by McGuire Woods.

ABOUT HILLER PLUMBING, HEATING, COOLING & ELECTRICAL

Hiller Plumbing, Heating, Cooling & Electrical (Hiller LLC) provides residential and commercial service and repair throughout Tennessee, Southern Kentucky, and Northern Alabama. As the homeowner's premier provider of choice with a 100% satisfaction guarantee, Hiller is Tennessee's largest residential and commercial plumbing, heating, air conditioning, and electrical services provider. Hiller, a 12-time honoree to the Inc. 5000 list and 5-time Ruud Reliable Contractor, employs more than 630 associates, boasts a fleet of 480 "Happy Face" trucks across 13 locations, and has responded to over 1.5M service calls.

ABOUT FREEBORN & PETERS

Freeborn & Peters LLP is a full-service law firm, headquartered in Chicago, with international capabilities and offices in New York City; Richmond, Va.; Springfield, Ill.; and Tampa, Fla. Freeborn is always looking ahead and seeking to find better ways to serve its clients. It takes a proactive approach to ensure its clients are more informed, prepared and able to achieve greater success – not just now, but also in the future. While the firm serves clients across a very broad range of sectors, it has also pioneered an interdisciplinary approach that serves the specific needs of targeted industries.

Freeborn's major achievements in litigation are reflective of the firm's significant growth over the last few years and its established reputation as a Litigation Powerhouse®. Freeborn has one of the largest litigation departments among Chicago-based law firms – currently with more than 90 litigators, which represents about two-thirds of the firm's lawyers.

Freeborn is a firm that genuinely lives up to its core values of integrity, effectiveness, teamwork, caring and commitment, and embodies them through high standards of client service and responsive action. Its lawyers build close and lasting relationships with clients and are driven to help them achieve their legal and business objectives. For more information, please visit www.freeborn.com.

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