

News From: Shea Stokes & Carter

For immediate release

Contact: Leah Swearingen (619) 231-8401 leah@swearingencom.com

Shea Stokes & Carter Wins \$3.35 Million Federal Employment Case on Behalf of Blind Director of Pennsylvania State Agency for the Blind

A federal jury awarded \$3.35 million to Christine L. Boone, the blind former director of Pennsylvania's Bureau of Blindness and Visual Services, determining that she was forced out as director in 2003 due to discrimination. Arch Stokes and Anne-Marie Mizel of Shea Stokes & Carter represented Ms. Boone, who said she was "elated" by the verdict.

The federal lawsuit named Stephen Nasuti, the now-retired executive director of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, his former agency, the state Department of Labor and Industry, and its secretary, Stephen Schmerin.

Mr. Stokes told jurors that Nasuti and others were threatened by Ms. Boone's approach to the job. "They didn't like the fact that she was pursuing things on behalf of the blind and visually impaired," in ways the agency previously had not, said Mr. Stokes. Nasuti "did not want to tolerate an assertive, independent blind woman," Mr. Stokes said.

The defendants argued that Ms. Boone was fired after three years as director because of her shortcomings as a manager, not for her blindness.

The jury awarded \$3 million in damages, \$175,000 in punitive damages, and \$180,000 in front pay. In lieu of \$180,000 in front pay, Mr. Stokes asked

U.S. District Judge Sylvia Rambo to reinstate Ms. Boone to her old job. “We’re going to ask Judge Rambo to reinstate Boone, because she is still eager to finish what she started,” said Mr. Stokes. “This is about making life and work better, more productive, and more successful for people who are blind and visually impaired in Pennsylvania,” he concluded.

Mr. Stokes is a national legal expert in labor and employment law. He has tried employment lawsuits in more than 30 states and in several countries. Shea Stokes & Carter’s labor and employment team serves clients in 35 states, including some of the most prominent hotel, resort, restaurant and travel companies in the United States.

For more information, contact Leah Swearingen at leah@swearingencom.com or visit www.sheastokes.com