

Culver City News

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LETTERS TO



THE EDITOR

JUDGMENT AGAINST OBSERVER PUBLISHER

On Feb. 13, 2019, a Los Angeles Superior Court Judge entered a judgment in my favor, awarding both compensatory and punitive damages, against Culver City Observer, Inc.—operator of the Culver City Observer newspaper, whose publisher is Stephen Hadland—due to it defaming me. One day before the trial, Ste-

phen Hadland removed himself from the case by petitioning for personal bankruptcy—Chapter 7 (“No property appears to be available to pay creditors.”).

The defamation involved my legal representation of the Ad Hoc Committee for Culver City Residents First (Committee) with respect to its anonymous door-to-door distribution of a political flyer during the last City-Council-election campaign. That flyer encouraged voters to vote, but not for two designated candidates.

In *McIntyre v. Ohio Elections Commission* 514 U.S. 334 (1995), the United States Supreme Court held, in pertinent part: “Under our Constitution, anonymous pamphleteering is not a pernicious, fraudulent practice, but an honorable tradition of advocacy and of dissent. Anonymity is a shield from the tyranny of the majority.”

The Judge found, in part, “Culver City Observer, Inc. published, via the Culver City Observer, the [] false statements [about me] with malice, acting intentionally and not recklessly, as part of an effort to intimate the [Committee] from exercising its Constitutional right of freedom of speech during a City-Council-election campaign.” The Culver City Observer incited vigilantes to follow and photograph Committee members. On its front-page, the newspaper published photographs of local residents who it claimed were Committee members.

In spite of the attempted intimidation, the Committee encourages all residents to invoke their Constitutional right of free speech during the next and all future City-Council elections. Furthermore, the Committee encourages new faces—who believe residents come first—to throw their hats into the ring.

— Les Greenberg
Esquire