

**Pat Benabe**

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**From:** "Pat Benabe" <patb42@sbcglobal.net>  
**To:** "DOEA INFO" <Information@elderaffairs.org>  
**Cc:** "DOEA INFO" <Information@elderaffairs.org>  
**Sent:** Monday, April 16, 2007 10:22 AM  
**Subject:** Re: Attention Stacy Merritt

Dear Stacy: It has been over 10 days since I contacted your organization requesting help for my mother (Helen Woichowski) and legal assistance for me. I received this notice and have heard nothing since. I was informed that the facility where my mother is being held has been sold or under new management. I have a question...does my mother go with the sale or is she to be placed somewhere without my knowledge thus ending any communication between us forever?

My mother is 88 years old...she is not incompetent nor is she unaware of her predicament. I find it unconscionable that she is still being held incommunicado by her "guardians". Can you imagine what it would feel like if you were in the position of not being able to communicate with those who you know? Imagine what it is like for her to be surrounded by strangers with no one to feel safe with? Can you understand what it must be like for her wondering what is happening to her granddaughter and great grandson and having no one to discuss the issue with? This is cruelty in its highest form. The guise of protection holds no water. The communication was halted so that my mother's side of the story will not be heard. Ann Ridings/Lutheran Services overstepped her authority and does not want any evidence to the contrary to be presented.

I am asking that you please immediately investigate this situation. What Ann Ridings has done to this family is criminal. She has criminalized a family situation. Only her side is being heard. My mother can clearly articulate and respond to the allegations against her granddaughter and put an end to this ongoing travesty. Ann Ridings insists that the phone calls are being restricted for my mother's protection and that family and friends are putting words into her mouth...I would suggest that someone go speak with my mother as no one can put words into her mouth...there is a history of events and circumstances that need to be heard from my mother and from her confidant of twenty years Lauren Pabis to put an end to this travesty.

Also according to Florida law s 744.3215(1)(K). (1). Fla. Stat. (2003) ...when the state takes away "a person's right to personal freedom, minimal due process requires proper written notice and a hearing at which the alleged incompetent may appear to present evidence in his/her own behalf.".....Guardianship proceedings must comport with constitutional notions of substantial justice and fair play."

There has been no fair play in the case of Helen Woichowski. It has been Ann Ridings/Lutheran Services that has spoken. Helen Woichowski, her family and friends have not been heard. Therefore I ask that someone contact my mother and listen to her side of the story before a tragedy occurs. sincerely, Pat Benabe

----- Original Message -----

**From:** DOEA INFO  
**To:** Pat Benabe  
**Sent:** Tuesday, April 03, 2007 2:26 PM  
**Subject:** Re: Attention Stacy Merritt

Dear Ms. Benabe:

Thank you for writing to the Florida Department of Elder Affairs. We have received your message and it has been forwarded to the appropriate staff member for action. You can expect to receive contact from us within the next ten business days. If we can be of further service to you, please do not hesitate to contact us again.

E. Douglas Beach, Ph.D.  
 Secretary

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>>> "Pat Benabe" <patb42@sbcglobal.net> 3/29/2007 3:06 PM >>>  
 Dear Ms. Merritt:

It was suggested that I contact your agency to ask for a court appointed assistant. I have attached a letter I sent this morning to Ann Ridings, Director of Lutheran Services, Sarasota, Florida.

The unwillingness of this agency to speak to me concerning my mother has been going on for almost a year now. It is difficult for me to confront this issue alone since I live in Kansas and I am also a senior citizen with a fixed income which prohibits me from retaining an attorney and travel.

What is being done to my mother is not "guardianship" in any stretch of the imagination. Lutheran Services has taken a family situation and criminalized it without hearing evidence to the contrary.

They took total control of a woman's life who did nothing but have a stroke. I believe the attached letter will explain some of my immediate concerns. I hope that your agency will be able to provide me some assistance in resolving this horrible situation.

I have documentation and witnesses who can give testimony regarding the alleged charges against my daughter. In the meantime, my mother is languishing by the phone going deeper into depression with no avenues of redress available to her.

The article that appeared in the Sarasota newspaper is pasted below. Thank you for your attention to this matter. I can be reached at 785-840-9942

Sincerely,  
Pat Benabe