

Statement from Ross M. Cellino Jr. to The Buffalo News

“The court case involving Mr. Looney simply seeks to divide a legal fee for work performed by multiple firms on behalf of a client. Rather than address the real issue in the case, Mr. Looney has sadly resorted to personal mud-slinging against Cellino Law and our personnel. I categorically deny the accuracy of his allegations, which are nothing more than a sensationalized and unfortunate attack by a disgruntled former employee.

For this particular case, Cellino & Barnes and Cellino Law worked on the case for four years and Looney worked on it for a few days. Mr. Looney is now demanding 90% of the fee. Apparently, Mr. Looney feels that he would be able to use untrue and purposely misleading statements about the firm and myself to intimidate me to back down and allow him to reap 90% of the fee when he is likely entitled to less than 1% of the fee. Mr. Looney has also suggested that I abandon any claim to the fees on the 70 cases that he took from my firm. I refused to reply to his outrageous and unreasonable suggestion. If I had agreed to that, the majority of the fees recovered would go to Mr. Looney and not to my firm or to Cellino & Barnes (50% of which goes to the beneficiaries of Steve Barnes’ Estate). This would end up hurting Steve Barnes’ three children who are his heirs. Steve and I spent years building our reputation to attract clients to our firm and Mr. Looney now wants to financially benefit by taking our files and unfairly sharing the fees with the Estate and with me. This is nothing more than a money grab by Mr. Looney. It takes hard work and skill to settle \$2 billion in cases, which is what Cellino & Barnes did for our clients. Steve and I built our firm one case at a time over a number of years. We did not take files from our former employers to instantly build our firm and then make outrageous untrue allegations with the hopes that our former employer would back down to unreasonable demands so we could receive most of the fees. We put in the work.

Did I want our lawyers, including Mr. Looney, to work hard aggressively moving their cases forward? The answer is absolutely yes. We never, and I repeat, never settle a case for less than full value. We pride ourselves on doing what is best for our clients and fighting hard for them. Our interests are always firmly aligned with the client. Every attorney who works in my firm knows this is our policy.

Cellino Law is one of the largest and strongest personal injury law firms in New York. Our attorneys across the state have earned the trust of thousands of clients, recovering millions of dollars on their behalf. Protecting our clients’ best interests has always been our highest priority and will always be our guiding principle as we continue to grow Cellino Law into the future.”