

23 May 2002

Dr. Ronald R. Blanck
Mr. William S. Le Maistre
North Texas Health Science Center
3500 Camp Bowie Boulevard
Fort Worth, Texas 76107

Sirs:

After reading the recent Fort Worth Business Weekly, in which you, Dr. Blanck, have portrayed me as not being cooperative, and also hearing from my attorney that you, Mr. Le Maistre, said that negotiations would go more smoothly if we were simply nicer to you, I feel compelled to write. Apparently you both need a healthy dose of reality.

Your purchase of my property at 902 Boland Street is not a friendly takeover. I have never wanted to sell my studio which has served my brother Scott and me and, I would like to think, the art lovers of Fort Worth well for almost twenty-five years.

In those twenty-five years I have personally witnessed the destruction of a pleasant middle class neighborhood of houses, art studios, and apartments as your medical complex silently metastasized throughout the area. And all during this time osteopathic spokespersons were publicly proclaiming that all you wanted to do was to be a good neighbor. I knew many of the people who lived and worked in the area. They were real neighbors of mine. One by one I saw them displaced, driven out by threats of Eminent Domain. I knew that sooner or later my turn would come as well.

At least two other times you made attempts to get my studio but backed off apparently under a cloud of bad publicity concerning a couple of botched operations and subsequent costly lawsuits. I knew my reprieve was only temporary, that one day somebody would appear at my front door and with a smile offer to purchase my property - or else. The irony in light of your remarks in the Business Weekly is that I was one of the few people who did cooperate with you, permitted your people to come onto my land and even into my building.

For another four years I have successfully managed to hang on to my place which I purchased in 1982 when interest rates were 19%. I still recall with pain the monthly check I sent to the bank, knowing that only \$140 was paid on the principal. This alone should demonstrate how much I wanted to have a studio and gallery there at 902 Boland Street, an unrivalled location in the Cultural District for artists. The following year I had the building reduced to a shell and completely rebuilt with more than 670 2" X 4" studs and new wiring and plumbing. I retained the humble appearance of the building except for a covering of wooden shingles. I wanted it to be unprepossessing because of the valuable art collections it housed. The strategy worked perhaps too well. When your people showed up again to

of \$568.00

negotiate the sale of my building it eventually dawned on me that you may have assumed that I was occupying a local shack and nothing more. It is a pity that neither one of you has ever personally asked to see it.

That you haven't visited our gallery or even talked to me personally about your takeover plans seems to illustrate the typical kind of corporate distance that has isolated you people and insulated you from the consequences of your land hunger and the human pain it has caused. I doubt that you have any idea - or would care if you did - just how much damage you have done to my brother and me and our business. The amount of money you have offered could never restore me to my status quo ante in the cultural district. You essentially have destroyed my business there. For the concomittant costs and emotional pain that you have caused, you - no doubt on advice from your legal department - have not even offered an apology.

Simple justice would have been served if you had offered reasonable compensation to help ameliorate the situation; it would have been a genuine demonstration of sensitivity to a crises you created. Other businesses concerned about their public image have gone beyond legal requirements to ease the pain of those they have displaced. Why can't you? Shouldn't there be a higher standard of behavior here, especially from a medical complex that is supposedly dedicated to healing pain instead of causing it. This would have been the classy thing to do and the right thing.

to replace all the losses
But, no, you have decided to follow another path. No doubt as part of your fiduciary responsibilities, you have fallen back upon the excuse that the state will not provide the funds to repair the damages suffered by nearby property owners. The Eminent Domain provisions which you have used to justify your lack of ethical behavior for more than two decades, have conveniently allowed compensation only for the certified appraisal of the property itself. Nowhere, ~~do~~ ^{have} there appear to be laws that restrict you from using other funds. The fact that you "volunteered" to pay moving costs after we raised the issue seems to show that you have access to funds not mandated by the state's Eminent Domain statutes.

All this appears to be part of a pattern of untruths and disinformation, to put it mildly, that have characterized your dealings with your neighbors and with the city of Fort Worth from the beginning. I was informed a long time ago by some of our most august city leaders about how you got your "foot in the door" on the west side and by misrepresenting your intentions slowly insinuated yourself into a position of power. If people had known that a small neighborhood clinic and some kind of school in a bowling alley would grow to seriously threaten the neighborhood with its corporate sprawl and buildings of industrial charm, I can tell you they would have done something about it. It is easy enough to see how dissembling became a corporate way of life when your servival was at stake.

Even for you it must have been embarrassing when it was discovered that for all the years you have threatened neighbors with the consequences of Eminent Domain and severely affected

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But, no, you have decided to follow another path. No doubt as part of your fiduciary responsibilities, you have fallen back upon the excuse that the state will not provide the funds to help replace the losses suffered by nearby property owners. The Eminent Domain provisions which you have used to justify your less than honorable behavior for more than two decades, have conveniently allowed compensation only for the certified appraisal of the property itself. Nowhere, however, do there appear to be laws that restrict you from using other funds. The fact that you "volunteered" to pay moving costs after we raised the issue seems to show that you have access to funds not mandated by the state's Eminent Domain statutes.

All this appears to be part of a pattern of untruths and disinformation, to put it mildly, that have characterized your dealings with your neighbors and with the city of Fort Worth from the beginning. I was informed a long time ago by some of our most august city leaders about how you got your "foot in the door" on the west side and by misrepresenting your intentions slowly insinuated yourself into a position of power. If people had known that a small neighborhood clinic and some kind of school in a bowling alley would grow to seriously threaten the neighborhood with its corporate sprawl and buildings of industrial charm, I can tell you they would have done something about it. It is easy enough to see how dissembling became a corporate way of life if you thought your survival was at stake.

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the biblical warning "By their deeds ye shall know them" is all too true in your case.

I just wonder when those who still have the unlucky fate of being your neighbors will at last wake up and do something about your decades-long abuse of the truth, your ugly buildings and your unchecked greed for more land.

Sincerely,

Stuart W. Gentling

cc. Ed Bass
Ruth Stevenson