



# BENTLEY GOODRICH KISON

A COMMERCIAL LITIGATION LAW FIRM

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*Board Certified Business Litigation*

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December 29, 2022

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Fournier, Connolly, Shamsey,  
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1 S. School Avenue  
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Sarasota, Florida 34237

Michael Wilson, Esq.  
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200 S. Orange Avenue  
Sarasota, Florida 34236

Re: Use of Van Wezel Name

Dear Bob and Mike:

This firm represents Tony Stone and Katherine Stone, the surviving Van Wezel heirs. I am writing to clarify the use of the Van Wezel name as it relates to the possible construction of a new Sarasota Performing Arts Center and any fundraising efforts related thereto.

As you know, in 2019, the former Van Wezel Foundation changed its name to the Sarasota Performing Arts Center Foundation, Inc. Also, as part of that change, it added a mission statement that the Foundation would explore the creation of a new Sarasota Performing Arts Center. Significantly, this new Center will be in lieu of the existing Van Wezel Hall, the future of which is to be decided separately by the City. Under the Interim Partnership Agreement with the City, the new Performing Arts Center is separate and apart from the existing Van Wezel and the current Van Wezel is not to compete with the new Performing Arts Center. In other words, the new Performing Arts Center is not a “new Van Wezel”; it is a brand-new facility.

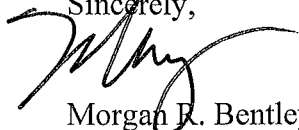
Given the above, the use of the Van Wezel name to promote a new facility or to fundraise for a new facility is wholly inappropriate. I have seen promotional materials that suggest the new facility is a new Van Wezel, materials that include the Van Wezel name as part of a fundraising effort for the new facility, and even a recent editorial on December 9 that referred to the “Van Wezel Foundation” and the construction of the new facility, even though the Foundation has not been known as the “Van Wezel Foundation” for almost three years. The Foundation website has still not been changed to reflect the new name of the Foundation.

Robert Fournier, Esq.  
Michael Wilson, Esq.  
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My request is that you direct your colleagues and constituents to cease using the Van Wezel name in relation to the construction of the new Performing Arts Center. More specifically, please remind your respective boards that the new facility will not be called the Van Wezel and is not a “new Van Wezel” in any way shape or form. Lastly, cease using the Van Wezel name in any materials or public statements by the Foundation that disparage, denigrates, or questions the viability of the current Van Wezel Auditorium.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Morgan R. Bentley', written over the typed name.

Morgan R. Bentley  
For the Firm

MRB:jmb

cc: Tony Stone and Katherine Stone