

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CIVIL RIGHTS CHAMPION TO DEFEND CAT RESCUER

Kathi Mills has retained powerful First Amendment champion Alan Begner to defend her against a libel suit brought by the Atlanta Humane Society.

A native of Atlanta, Begner has achieved national prominence in the 20 years he has provided counsel in civil rights cases. Best known for defending the rights of owners of adult entertainment clubs and novelty shops, Begner has represented a variety of clients, including Dominique Wilkins and Hosea Williams. Most recently, he worked to defeat Georgia's video poker ban.

"I am confident that Mr. Begner has the expertise to protect my right to free speech in court," Mills said.

In a private Internet e-mail group in November, Mills referred to the Atlanta Humane Society's executive director, Bill Garrett, as "Mr. Kill" and criticized the humane society for failing to spay or neuter pets before adoption, not performing cruelty investigations, and refusing to allow no-kill groups to rescue pets that were scheduled to be killed.

The humane society sued Mills in early January for no less than \$75,000, claiming her statements were defamatory. Mills has argued that they are opinions that are protected by the First Amendment.

In March, Gwinnett Superior Court Judge Billy Ray denied the humane society's motion to keep documents produced in the lawsuit hidden from public scrutiny. The humane society argued that making these documents public would expose organizational secrets that would embarrass them.

In April, the humane society responded to Mills' documentation request, but refused to provide any of the information specified.

"With Mr. Begner's help, I intend to obtain information from the humane society that will prove my statements are true," Mills said.

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