

Science center sues to prevent Titanic exhibit from jumping ship

BY CHUCK WANAGER | STAFF WRITER

In brief



Orlando Science Center vs. Worldwide Licensing & Merchandising Inc.

Case no.: 2008-CA-10254

Date filed: May 5

Plaintiff's attorney: Jeffrey Badgley, Anderson & Badgley PL, Winter Park

Defendant's attorney: Jonathan Sbar and Robert Roche, Roche, McLean & Sbar PA, Tampa

Titanic The Experience and the Orlando Science Center have hit rough seas.

The science center wants Orange County Circuit Court in Orlando to force exhibit owner G. Michael Harris, president of Worldwide Licensing & Merchandising, to finish out the exhibit's planned 12-month run at the science center.

The \$4 million exhibit — previously on International Drive until its landlord decided to redevelop that location — moved to the science center at 777 E. Princeton St. last December. The Titanic exhibit was to remain there through Jan. 4, 2009.

However, in March, Worldwide Licensing & Merchandising told the science center it intended to move all or most of the Titanic exhibit to another facility on International Drive in Orlando sometime before January.

In a previous *OBJ* interview, Harris said he planned to relocate the exhibit in Central Florida after the science center run. He envisioned housing the attraction and hotel in a life-size replica of the 880-foot ship, complete with a replica village similar to the Belfast docks where the ship was built, as well as a dinner show, theater and a hotel.

The science center says moving the exhibit earlier than agreed upon would

cause "immediate and irreparable harm." The exhibit takes up about 8,400 square feet in the center and includes an 11-foot iceberg and an 8-foot replica of the doomed luxury ship.

Harris now seeks to transfer the case to business court, which specializes in intricate cases such as antitrust, intellectual property and franchise suits.

Several attempts to contact Harris by phone were unsuccessful. His attorney, Jonathan Sbar of Tampa law firm Roche, McLean & Sbar PA, declines to comment.

The science center's attorney, Jeffrey Badgley of Winter Park-based Anderson & Badgley, also declines to comment on the case, but adds the science center has been very happy with the exhibit.