

**Guardianship Abuse group  
following Rita Denmark case**

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Among those who attended last Friday's hearing in McKean County Orphan's Court, and paid close attention to what Senior Visiting Judge H. William White said and did, were several members of the National Association to Stop Guardian Abuse (NASGA).

Although they did not participate in the hearing, they did sit in the small court room where it was held, and handed out large pin-back buttons to anyone who wanted one. During a break in proceedings they huddled with the litigant who was present, Holly Peffer, who is seeking to have a Florida guardianship over her mother, Rita Denmark, dissolved, and the elderly widow returned to Bradford where she had lived nearly all her life.

Among NASGA activists present was Sara Harvey. Also on hand was Tim Lahrman, who has attained some notoriety for his activities in connection with guardianship-conservatorship abuse.

"Over the years, a growing uncaring and unjust legal system has helped convert guardianship-conservatorship from an appropriate law to one which, if misused, is damaging to the general public," NASGA says on its website.

The group points out that the purpose of guardianship provisions is to guard and conserve: to guard incapacitated or incompetent people from harming themselves or their interests, and to conserve their assets and property.

"At present, it [guardianship laws] operates to ensnare the most vulnerable people in a larger and larger trawling net, now including those merely physically 'incapacitated'! It has become a feeding trough for unethical lawyers and other 'fiduciaries' appointed by courts to protect, but many of them have become nothing more than predators."

On their website and in their literature, NASGA describes sequences of events and procedures used to gain total control over the wards placed in the care of guardians, and includes unethical attorneys and corrupt judges among the players in a system gone awry,

as they see things.

Tim Lahrman became involved in the crusade against guardianship abuse because of his own experience of having been placed under a guardian and admitted to a psychiatric facility, at the instigation of his brother—resulting in estrangement from his children, and loss of involvement in a corporation he had founded. His "adventure" began in 1987 and came to a head earlier this year.