

GPM September Pro Bono Spotlight

September 15, 2016

Gray Plant Mooty attorneys Amanda Sicoli and Mike Flom recently assisted a woman who was at risk of losing her housing—while she was hospitalized with a serious medical condition—because of damage to her apartment caused by an abusive ex-boyfriend. Because of their assistance, T.T.'s landlord agreed to allow T.T. to stay in her apartment indefinitely, avoiding an eviction for T.T. that would likely have made T.T. and her teenage daughter homeless.

T.T. had just received a letter from her landlord, giving her a month's notice to quit her apartment, when she was hospitalized and placed in a medically induced coma. Amanda took the case and was persistent in following up on changes in T.T.'s medical condition, which at first prevented Amanda from obtaining any of the information she needed from her client. After Joy Anderson obtained a one-month stay of the notice to quit to give T.T. time to heal, Amanda wrote to the landlord to remind it of its obligations under the federal Violence Against Women Act, which prevents a landlord of a Section 8 or public housing unit from evicting a tenant for the actions of her abuser. Amanda informed the landlord that it had no basis to evict T.T. for property damage by T.T.'s ex-boyfriend, at which point the landlord brought up other purported lease violations. Ultimately, Mike was able to step in and negotiate a settlement agreement between T.T. and her landlord, which allowed T.T. to stay in her apartment—even though Mike was never able to see a copy of the lease or notice to quit, which the landlord refused to produce despite repeated requests. Through this team effort, GPM attorneys were able to save the housing of a woman who truly needed help.