

Canadian Dare Foods Heiress Launches Oppression Suit against Brothers



Harmon and Carolyn Dare Wilfred

Carolyn Dare Wilfred, Canadian Dare Foods' heiress and great-grand daughter of the company founder, commenced legal proceedings on June 17, 2015 against Dare and her two older brothers in an effort to conclude a long running family feud involving shareholder oppression, and familial sexual discrimination.

Kitchener, Waterloo, Canada, June 22, 2015

The Statement of Claim #CV15-11001-00CL follows Carolyn's decision in January 2014 to sell her stake in Dare Foods through Christchurch chartered accountant Taurus Group Limited and focus on her New Zealand interests with her stateless husband, former American Harmon Wilfred.

“The men in my family have patronised and diminished me as a sister and a woman and I have had enough!”

Due to what the claim characterises as the defendant's deliberate oppressive and obstructive actions, Carolyn has been unable to sell her shares in the family holdings.

The petition has been filed with the Ontario Superior Court of Justice, naming defendants Bryan Robert Dare and Graham Neal Dare, their respective holding companies and Serad Holdings Limited, the family holding company owning 80% of Dare Holdings Limited, which in turn owns 100% of Dare Foods Limited.

All three siblings became owners of Serad after their father Carl M. Dare set up the Dare Family Trust in 1980, which irrevocably transferred the family business to the Trust for the equal benefit of his three children.

The Statement of Claim is pursuant to sections 207 and 248 of the Ontario Business Corporations Act (“OBCA”).

Dare Foods products can be found in most North American pantries and include stalwarts such as Wagon Wheels, Breton Crackers and Boulangerie Grissol Fine Bread. The company owns and operates many large scale production facilities in North America, employs 1300 people and distributes products throughout Canada, the United States and at least 25 other countries. It is one of the world's best known quality brands in bakery and snacks.

Speaking from her home just outside Christchurch, New Zealand, Carolyn says she sadly has no other alternative but to file a Statement of Claim in Ontario, Canada, to move on from the continuing family wrangling and unjust treatment:

“There's been years of oppression by my late father and brothers to attempt to keep me out of the family business and without benefit”.

“Their behaviour has been outrageous and hurtful. The men in my family have patronised and diminished me as a sister and a woman and I've had enough! Their long standing conduct goes against any notion of family and is ripping the Dare heritage apart”.

“I grew up in a traditional German family, where women were treated differently, discriminated against and never allowed to be an integral part of the family business”.

“My action is aimed at achieving what’s fair, and allowing me to move on from Dare Foods, the Dare family and get on with my life,” she says.

Financially, her life is pale compared to the comfortable existence of her two brothers who have received millions of dollars in declared dividends from Dare Holdings Limited while she has received nothing from her share of the family business since 2006.

The Statement of Claim highlights the oppressive actions of the defendants and calls for:

- The winding up of Serad including its 80% majority interest in Dare Holdings assets being distributed to the shareholders and further compensation paid to the plaintiff Carolyn Dare Wilfred or;
- An order for Serad’s 80% majority interest in Dare Holdings be sold in a public auction or;
- An order to appoint a Certified Business Valuator of Serad with an order that the defendant’s purchase Carolyn’s share at fair market value.

Ownership of Dare Foods has remained with the Dare family since its inception when the founder Charles H. Doerr started making and selling cookies and candies in a small grocery shop in Kitchener, Ontario in 1892.

The most recent family patriarch, Carolyn’s father, Carl M. Dare, passed away in April 2014, aged 96. CM Dare controlled the operations of the business, and Serad, and was the driving force behind the success of Dare Foods for over 70 years. He is credited with modernising and developing the company as one of the largest Canadian privately run food businesses to survive consolidation.

In this latest turn of events, the Statement of Claim is set to publicly test the notion of Dare Foods as a stable international family business. It will also challenge the future family ownership structure of Dare Foods and reveal the secret inner workings of one of Canada’s most well-known global family businesses.

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