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Judge
y (Riverside)

ghts: Appointed to the
nty Superior Court by Gov.
rzenegger, 2009; supervising
defender, Riverside County,
e practitioner, Riverside,
deputy public defender,
nty, 1994-98; associate,
ckham & Werner LLP, San
992-94

Western State University
y, 1991

Bankruptcy trustee threatens to remove Girardi from home

By Craig Anderson
Daily Journal Staff Writer

A bankruptcy trustee is threatening to remove embattled plaintiffs' attorney Thomas V. Girardi from his Pasadena home.

Attorneys for Chapter 7 Trustee Jason M. Rund filed a motion Tuesday asking U.S. Bankruptcy Judge Barry Russell to compel Girardi to turn over his home so that it can be sold to help pay his debts.

But it's not clear how much money Rund could get for the house, given the likelihood of various liens and property taxes owed on it.

The property could be worth as little as \$175,000, the homeowner's exemption Girardi receives, according to Ronald N. Richards, a Beverly Hills attorney who has been following the legal saga.

Richards said it is "very unusual" for Chapter 7 trustees to move to evict a debtor from his home.

The move follows a Jan. 25 stand-off between Rund and Girardi's attorney, Leonard Pena, of Pena & Soma APC, over getting access to the property to allow the trustee's real estate broker to inspect it.

The goal, Rund wrote in a Tuesday declaration, is to market and sell the property.

"I was not provided with access for various reasons, many of which [including the Debtor's health conditions] may not be resolved for many months," Rund added. *In re: Thomas Vincent Girardi*, 20-BK21020 (C.D. Bankruptcy Ct, filed Dec. 18, 2020).

Pena — who said he represents Thomas Girardi through his brother Robert, who was granted temporary conservatorship by a Los Angeles County judge on Monday — stated in a phone interview Thursday he will respond to the trustee's motion "in a timely fashion" but otherwise

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ment of educational requirements to
educate the armed forces on uncon-

vestigation into why African-American
World War I heroes had never
been either recommended for or nev-

stead, the Army drew up plans and
built a special "colored officers'
barracks," where the chaplain was
housed by himself. Jackie Robinson

refusing

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declined to comment.

Girardi — who not long ago lived a high-flying lifestyle while representing plaintiffs in major litigation — is now in bankruptcy, facing claims for millions of dollars as well as allegations he stole

money from clients.

In a declaration, Rund wrote he learned of the value of Girardi's house while reviewing documents at Girardi's law firm, in which the attorney had prepared a financial statement dated March 10, 2020 identifying his personal assets and

valuing the house at \$16.5 million.

Girardi's document may be overly optimistic. Online real estate listings say Girardi's house is worth closer to \$6.86 million.

The trustee handling the bankruptcy of the Girardi Keese law firm, Elissa D. Miller of Sulmeyer

Kupetz APC, wrote Thursday she intends to abandon a claim to a 2018 Mercedes-Benz S560 because it was "burdensome and of inconsequential value to the estate." *In re: Girardi Keese*, 20-BK21022 (C.D. Bankruptcy Ct, filed Dec. 18).

Rund, a partner at Sheridan & Rund PC, seeks to compel Girardi to turn over the property no later than 14 days after the motion is entered.

But Timothy J. Yoo, an attorney with Levene, Neale, Bender, Yoo & Brill LLP who represents the trustee, added in a footnote that Rund is aware of the conserva-

torship appointment and that he is open to delaying Girardi's removal if access to the property is allowed.

Rund wrote he has discovered Girardi's maintenance staff quit because they were not being paid, his insurance was about to expire, and that his utility bills were not being paid either.

"For these reasons, I believe it is in the best interest of the estate to obtain access and market the property as soon as possible," Rund added.

Rund's failed attempt to get access to Girardi's home occurred less than three days after some-

one reported a burglary there.

Lt. Bill Grifase of the Pasadena Police Department said someone at the house identifying himself as Tom Girardi reported a break-in at 11:15 p.m. on Jan. 22.

Police officers did not locate a suspect or determine if anything was taken but did say someone had apparently forced their way into the house through a broken window.

"There was some presumed loss, but officers were unable to confirm" what was taken, Grifase said in a phone interview Thursday.

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