7-13-861-7466



VIA MAIL AND FACSIMILE

April 23, 2009

Debra Brewer Hayes, Esq. The Hayes Law Firm, P.C. 4265 San Felipe, Suite 1000 Houston, TX 77027

Subject:

FINRA Dispute Resolution Arbitration Number 08-01188

Shari Ackerman, James and Mary Anne Majerik, and Ferrell Bush v. Morgan

Keegan & Company

Dear Ms. Hayes:

In accordance with the Code of Arbitration Procedure I enclose the decision reached by the arbitrator(s) in the above-referenced matter.

#### Responsibility to Pay Monetary Award

Pursuant to the Code of Arbitration Procedure<sup>1</sup> the responsible party must pay any monetary awards within 30 days of receipt unless a motion to vacate has been filed with a court of competent jurisdiction. If an award is not paid within 30 days, the responsible party must pay post-judgment interest at the legal rate or as provided in the award by the arbitrator(s).

#### Tracking Payment of Award

FINRA Dispute Resolution has implemented a system of monitoring and tracking compliance with arbitration awards by members and associated persons. We request prevailing claimants to notify us in writing when their awards have not been paid within 30 days of receipt of the award, and require member firms to certify in writing that they have complied with awards against them or their associated persons.

Written notification concerning award compliance or lack thereof must be directed to:

Avichai Badash FINRA Dispute Resolution One Liberty Plaza 165 Broadway, 52nd Floor

<sup>1</sup>Customer Code Rule 12904 Industry Code Rule 13904 Old Code Rule 10330(h)

## New York, NY 10006 212-858-4325 (tel) 301-527-4739 (fax)

# Expedited Suspension Proceedings for Non-Payment of Awards

Members and associated persons who do not comply with an award in a timely manner are subject to expedited suspension proceedings as set forth in Rule 9554.

## Right to File Motion to Vacate Award

All awards are **final** and are not subject to review or appeal by the arbitration panel or by FINRA Dispute Resolution. Any party wishing to challenge the award must make a motion to vacate the award **in a federal or state court** of appropriate jurisdiction pursuant to the Federal Arbitration Act, 9 U.S.C. § 10, or applicable state statute. There are limited grounds for vacating an arbitration award, and a party must bring a motion to vacate within the time period specified by the applicable statute. Parties and counsel should consult federal and state statutes and case law to determine the appropriate court, standards, and time limitations in their individual circumstances. FINRA Dispute Resolution is not authorized to provide legal advice concerning a motion to vacate.

A motion to vacate, confirm, or modify an arbitration award is a matter only between the parties to the arbitration. FINRA Dispute Resolution is not a proper party to post-award motions and should not be named as a party to any post-award motion. However, for cases filed on or after April 12, 2004, if the award contains expungement relief, or if a party seeks expungement relief in court, there may be a duty to name FINRA as a party as provided in Rule 2130.

### Questions Concerning Award

Please direct any questions regarding this award to me. The parties must not contact the arbitrators directly.

#### Forum Fees

You will receive under separate cover an invoice that reflects the fees assessed and any outstanding balance or refund due. Fees are due and payable to FINRA Dispute Resolution upon receipt of the invoice and remitted to the address specified on the invoice.

Any applicable refunds will also be sent under separate cover approximately 45 days after the case closes. Pursuant to the Code of Arbitration Procedure, "Any refunds of fees or costs incurred under the Code will be paid directly to the named parties, even if a non-party made payment on behalf of the named parties."<sup>2</sup>

All questions regarding payment of fees and refunds should be directed to FINRA Finance at (240) 386-5910.

#### Arbitration Evaluation

As a service organization, the primary goals of FINRA Dispute Resolution are the integrity of its process and the satisfaction of its clients. To ensure that we are meeting your needs and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Customer Code Rule 12902(e) Industry Code Rule 13902(e)

satisfying our commitment to you, we need to hear from you. If you have not already done so, please take the time to complete an evaluation of our services, the process, and the arbitrator(s) assigned to your case. For your convenience, we have now made it possible for you to evaluate our services using the Internet. Please direct your Web browser to http://www.finra.org/arbevaluation.

If you do not have Internet access, or have difficulty completing the evaluation form online, we will send a hard copy evaluation form to you. The completed evaluation form should be mailed in to the address indicated below. If you need a hard copy of the evaluation form, please contact the undersigned. Whenever possible, however, we encourage you to use the new online version, as it will help us to review your feedback in a more expeditious manner. Your feedback is a valuable and necessary component in our efforts to serve you better.

Very truly yours.

**/S/** 

Nene E. Ndem Case Administrator Phone: 561-416-0277 Fax: 301-527-4868

SEProcessingCenter@finra.org

NEN:ab2:LC09A idr: 03/09/2009

#### RECIPIENTS:

Andrea Morgan Greene, Esq., Morgan Keegan & Company Inc Maynard, Cooper & Gale, PC, 1901 Sixth Avenue, North, 2400 Regions/Harbert Plaza, Birmingham, AL 35203

Debra Brewer Hayes, Esq., Shari Ackerman The Hayes Law Firm, P.C., 4265 San Felipe, Suite 1000, Houston, TX 77027

Debra Brewer Hayes, Esq., Ferrell Bush The Hayes Law Firm, P.C., 4265 San Felipe, Suite 1000, Houston, TX 77027

Debra Brewer Hayes, Esq., James E. and Mary Anne Majerik The Hayes Law Firm, P.C., 4265 San Felipe, Suite 1000, Houston, TX 77027

# Award FINRA Dispute Resolution

In the Matter of the Arbitration Between:

Names of the Claimants
Shari Ackerman
James E. Majerik
Mary Anne Maierik

Ferrell Bush

Name of the Respondent

Morgan Keegan & Company, Inc.

Case Number: 08-01188

Hearing Site: Birmingham, Alabama

Nature of the Dispute: Customer vs. Member.

#### REPRESENTATION OF PARTIES

For Shari Ackerman ("Ackerman"), James E Majerik ("J. Majerik"), Mary Anne Majerik ("M. Majerik") and Ferrell Bush ("Bush"), hereinafter collectively referred to as "Claimants": Debra Brewer Hayes, Esq. and Eric Osteen, Esq., The Hayes Law Firm, P.C., Houston, Texas.

For Morgan Keegan & Company Inc., hereinafter referred to as "Respondent": Carl Burkhalter, Esq. and Andrea Morgan Greene, Esq., Maynard, Cooper & Gale, P.C., Birmingham, Alabama.

## CASE INFORMATION

Statement of Claim filed on or about: April 18, 2008.

Claimant J. Majerik signed the Submission Agreement: February 4, 2008.

Claimant M. Majerik signed the Submission Agreement: February 4, 2008.

Claimant Bush signed the Submission Agreement: February 13, 2008.

Claimant Ackerman signed the Submission Agreement: February 26, 2008.

Respondent signed the Submission Agreement: June 13, 2008.

Statement of Answer filed by Respondent on or about: July 24, 2008.

Request for Emergency Hearing Before Full Panel to Seek Partial Reconsideration of Discovery Order filed by Respondent on or about: December 22, 2008.

Response to Respondent's Request for Emergency Hearing Before Full Panel to Seek Partial Reconsideration of Discovery Order filed by Claimants on or about: December 31, 2008.

Motion to Dismiss with Prejudice for Failure to Comply with FINRA Rule 12204(b)(2) filed by Respondent on or about: January 16, 2009.

Response to Respondent's Motion to Dismiss with Prejudice for Failure to Comply with FINRA Rule 12204(b)(2) filed by Claimants on or about: January 26, 2009.

Apr. 23. 2009is 4:51PMolution Arbitration No. 08-01188 Award Page 2 of 6

#### **CASE SUMMARY**

Claimants asserted the following causes of action: (1) breach of fiduciary duty; (2) breach of contract; (3) unsuitability; (4) failure to supervise; (5) violations of securities regulatory rules; (6) violations of the Alabama Securities Act; and, (7) common law claims. The causes of action relate to Claimants' investments in the Regions MK Select High Income-C Fund (RHICX), hereinafter referred to as the "Fund".

Unless specifically admitted in its Answer, Respondent denied the allegations made in the Statement of Claim and asserted various affirmative defenses.

#### RELIEF REQUESTED

In the Statement of Claim, Claimants requested: (1) compensatory damages in the amount of \$150,000.00, comprised of: a) all net out of pocket losses in the accounts; (b) all charges to the accounts; and, (c) the lost earnings that the accounts would have earned if they had been properly invested; (2) pre-judgment interest at the maximum statutory interest rate on all losses sustained from the date of the transactions until the date of the award; (3) post-judgment interest at the maximum statutory interest rate; (4) rescission of the purchases of the Fund shares; (5) all costs, including hearing session fees, and costs in bringing this action, (6) attorneys' fees in bringing this action under Alabama statutory law, common law as well as under FINRA Rules of Fair Practice; 7) costs and expenses including expert witness fees; and, (8) punitive damages.

At the close of the hearing, Claimants increased their compensatory damages request to the amount of \$208,215.00, comprised of \$38,737.00 to Claimant Ackerman, \$131,520.00 to Claimants J. Majerik and M. Majerik and \$37,958.00 to Claimant Bush. Additionally, Claimants specified their request for pre-judgment interest in the amount of \$54,337.00.

In Respondent's Answer to the Statement of Claim, Respondent requested: (1) that the Panel reject Claimants' Statement of Claim in its entirety; (2) that its attorneys' fees and costs be paid by Claimants; and, (3) that forum fees be borne by Claimants.

At the close of the hearing, Respondent requested attorneys' fees in the amount of \$25,000.00 and that all hearing session fees be assessed against Claimants.

## OTHER ISSUES CONSIDERED AND DECIDED

The Panel acknowledges that they have each read the pleadings and other materials filed by the parties.

On or about December 22, 2008, Respondent filed a Motion for an Emergency Hearing Before the Full Panel to Seek Partial Reconsideration of Discovery Order. Therein, Respondent asserted [in a footnote] that Claimants failure to file the necessary opt-out notice required by FINRA Rule 12204 bars their entire claim and serves as an independent reason for Claimants' request for discovery to be denied. On or about December 23, 2008, the Panel conducted a pre-hearing conference with the parties on

Apr. 23. 2009is 4:51PMolution Arbitration No. 08-01188 Award Page 3 of 6

this motion at which time the Panel agreed to allow time for Claimants to file a response to the motion. During the pre-hearing conference, Respondent raised the issue of Claimants' alleged non-compliance with the opt-out provisions of Rule 12204 of the Code of Arbitration Procedure, (the "Code"). Claimants agreed to discuss this issue in their response to Respondent's Motion for Partial Reconsideration. On or about December 31, 2008, Claimants filed their response to Respondent's Motion and asserted among other things, that the putative class action includes Respondent as well as many other defendants who are not subject to FINRA's jurisdiction, and thus not a part of this arbitration. Additionally, Claimants stated that Respondent has not fully briefed its request for dismissal of Claimants' claims.

On January 2, 2009, the Panel heard oral arguments from the parties on, among other things, Respondent's request for dismissal pursuant to Rule 12204 of the Code. On or about January 7, 2009, the Panel issued an Order that, among other things, directed Claimants to file their Rule 12204 opt-out Notice with FINRA Dispute Resolution no later than January 9, 2009. The Order further stated that Respondent may file a response to Claimants' Notice by January 16, 2009, and if needed, the Panel would conduct an additional pre-hearing conference to resolve any challenges to the sufficiency of Claimants' opt-out Notice.

On or about January 6, 2009, Claimants filed with FINRA Dispute Resolution, a Notice which stated that Claimants opt-out of the class action as to their claims against Respondent. Thereafter, on or about January 16, 2009, Respondent asserted a Motion to Dismiss this action in its entirety, with prejudice, due to Claimants' alleged failure to file a complete opt-out of the putative class action proceedings, in compliance with FINRA Rule12204(b)(2). In response, Claimants stated among other things, that because the class action does not involve the same claims or the same defendants, and because Claimants have already opted-out of the claims against Respondent in any class action, Respondent's Motion to Dismiss should be denied. Following an executive session, the Panel issued an Order dated January 30, 2009, which granted Respondent's Motion to Dismiss, without prejudice, on the grounds that Claimants' [January 6, 2009] Notice did not meet the requirements of Rule 12204(b)(2). The Order stated that Claimants' Notice does not affirmatively state that they will not participate in the class action pending in the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Tennessee styled In re Regions Morgan Keegan Open-End Mutual Fund Litigation (Civil Action No. 2:07-CV-2784), hereinafter referred to as the "Class Action", or in any recovery that may result from the Class Action. The Panel granted Claimants the opportunity to re-file a Notice that complies with Rule 12204(b)(2), no later than February 9, 2009, failing which the Panel would dismiss the arbitration with prejudice.

On February 9, 2009, Claimants filed with FINRA Dispute Resolution a Notice that stated that Claimants will not participate in the Class Action, or in any recovery that may result from the Class Action. On February 10, 2009, the Panel issued an Order which stated that the Panel reviewed Claimants' February 9, 2009, opt-out Notice and found that the Notice meets the requirements of Rule 12204(b)(2), and accordingly, reinstated the case.

Respondent filed a Motion to Exclude Testimony and Bar the Presentation of Irrelevant Evidence Relating to Fund Management Issues within 20 days of the evidentiary

Apr. 23. 2009is 4:52PMolution No. 2983 P.

Arbitration No. 08-01188

Award Page 4 of 6

hearings, which the Panel determined not to consider under Rule 12503(a)(3) of the Code.

The parties have agreed that the Award in this matter may be executed in counterpart copies or that a handwritten, signed Award may be entered.

#### <u>AWARD</u>

After considering the pleadings, the testimony and evidence presented at the hearing, and the post-hearing submissions (if any), the Panel has decided in full and final resolution of the issues submitted for determination as follows:

Respondent is liable and shall pay to Claimant Ackerman compensatory damages in the amount of \$38,737.00, pre-judgment interest specifically excluded.

Respondent is liable and shall pay to Claimant Bush compensatory damages in the amount of \$37,958.00, pre-judgment interest specifically excluded.

Respondent is liable and shall pay to Claimants Ackerman and Bush interest on their respective compensatory damage awards at the rate of 6% per annum accruing from the date the award is served until paid in full.

Respondent is liable and shall pay to Claimants Ackerman and Bush, costs in the amount of \$4,474.34, representing 66.7% of the "out-of-pocket expenses" set forth in the Affidavit of Debra Brewer Hayes in Support of Attorney Fees and Costs.

Claimants J. Majerik and M. Majerik's claims are denied in their entirety.

Respondent is liable and shall reimburse Claimants the sum of \$300.00, representing the non-refundable portion of the claim-filing fee paid by Claimants to FINRA Dispute Resolution.

Any and all claims for relief not specifically addressed herein, including Claimants' request for punitive damages and the parties' respective requests for attorneys' fees, are denied.

#### <u>FEES</u>

Pursuant to the Code, the following fees are assessed:

## Filing Fees

FINRA Dispute Resolution assessed a filing fee\* for each claim: Initial claim filing fee

= \$1,425.00

<sup>\*</sup>The filing fee is made up of a non-refundable and a refundable portion.

Apr. 23. 2009<sub>st</sub> 4:52PM<sub>olution</sub> No. 2983 P.

Arbitration No. 08-01188

Award Page 5 of 6

## Member Fees

Member fees are assessed to each member firm that is a party in these proceedings or to the member firm(s) that employed the associated person(s) at the time of the event(s) giving rise to the dispute. Accordingly, Respondent is a member firm.

Member surcharge= \$1,700.00Pre-hearing process fee= \$ 750.00Hearing process fee= \$2,750.00

#### **Adjournment Fees**

Adjournments granted during these proceedings for which fees were assessed:

January 12- 16, 2009, adjournment by parties

The Panel waived the adjournment fee.

#### Contested Motion for Issuance of a Subpoena Fees

Fees apply for each decision on a contested motion for the issuance of a subpoena.

One (1) Decision on a contested motion for the issuance of a subpoena
(1) One arbitrator @ \$200.00 = \$200.00

Total Contested Motion for Issuance of Subpoenas Fees = \$200.00

- 1. The Panel has assessed \$100.00 of the contested motion for issuance of subpoenas fees jointly and severally to Claimants.
- 2. The Panel has assessed \$100.00 of the contested motion for issuance of subpoenas fees to Respondent.

## **Hearing Session Fees and Assessments**

The Panel has assessed hearing session fees for each session conducted. A session is any meeting between the parties and the arbitrators, including a pre-hearing conference with the arbitrators, that lasts four (4) hours or less. Fees associated with these proceedings are:

Three (3) Pre-hearing sessions with a single arbitrator @ \$450.00			= \$1,350.00
Pre-hearing conferences:	November 25, 2008	1 session	
	December 18, 2008	1 session	
	April 6, 2009	1 session	
	•		
Four (4) Pre-hearing sessions with Panel @ \$1,125.00			= \$4,500.00
Pre-hearing conferences:	August 26, 2008	1 session	
	· ·		
	December 23, 2008	1 session	

1 session

March 26, 2009

Apr. 23. 2009is 4:52 PMolution Arbitration No. 08-01188

Award Page 6 of 6

No. 2983

Eight (8) Hearing sessions @ \$1,125.00

Hearing Dates:

April 13, 2009

2 sessions

April 14, 2009 April 15, 2009

2 sessions

April 16, 2009

2 sessions 2 sessions

**Total Hearing Session Fees** 

=\$14,850.00

=\$9,000.00

1. The Panel has assessed \$11,137.50 of the hearing session fees jointly and severally to Claimants.

2. The Panel has assessed \$3,712.50 of the hearing session fees to Respondent.

All balances are payable to FINRA Dispute Resolution and are due upon receipt.

#### **ARBITRATION PANEL**

J. Maxwell Williams

Public Arbitrator, Presiding Chairperson

4/23/09

Earle Park Kelley

/s/

Public Arbitrator

Richard David Schultz

Non-Public Arbitrator

## Concurring Arbitrators' Signatures

J. Maxwell Williams Public Arbitrator, Presiding Chairperson	Signature Date
/s/	4/23/09
Earle Park Kelley Public Arbitrator	Signature Date

/s/ 4/23/09

Richard David Schultz Signature Date

Non-Public Arbitrator

April 23, 2009

FINRA Dispute Resolution Arbitration No. 08-01188 Award Page 6 of 6

Eight (8) Hearing sessions @ \$1,125.00

=\$9,000.00

Hearing Dates:

April 13, 2009 April 14, 2009 2 sessions 2 sessions

April 15, 2009

2 sessions

April 16, 2009

2 sessions

Total Hearing Session Fees

=\$14,850.00

- 1. The Panel has assessed \$11,137.50 of the hearing session fees jointly and severally to Claimants.
- 2. The Panel has assessed \$3,712.50 of the hearing session fees to Respondent.

All balances are payable to FINRA Dispute Resolution and are due upon receipt.

## **ARBITRATION PANEL**

J. Maxwell Williams

Public Arbitrator, Presiding Chairperson

Earle Park Kelley

Public Arbitrator

Richard David Schultz

Non-Public Arbitrator

## Concurring Arbitrators' Signatures

J. Maxwell Williams

Signature Date

Public Arbitrator, Presiding Chairperson

Earle Park Kelley Public Arbitrator

Signature Date

Richard David Schultz

Non-Public Arbitrator

FINRA Dispute Resolution Arbitration No. 08-01188 Award Page 6 of 6

Eight (8) Hearing sessions @ \$1,125.00

Hearing Dates:

April 13, 2009

2 sessions

April 14, 2009 April 15, 2009

2 sessions 2 sessions

April 16, 2009

2 sessions

Total Hearing Session Fees

=\$14,850.00

=\$9,000.00

- 1. The Panel has assessed \$11,137.50 of the hearing session fees jointly and severally to Claimants.
- 2. The Panel has assessed \$3,712.50 of the hearing session fees to Respondent.

All balances are payable to FINRA Dispute Resolution and are due upon receipt.

## ARBITRATION PANEL

J. Maxwell Williams

Public Arbitrator, Presiding Chairperson

Earle Park Kelley

Public Arbitrator

Richard David Schultz

Non-Public Arbitrator

## Concurring Arbitrators' Signatures

J. Maxwell Williams

Public Arbitrator, Presiding Chairperson

Signature Date

Earle Park Kelley

Public Arbitrator

Richard David Schultz

Non-Public Arbitrator

Signature Date

No. 2983 P. 12

FINRA Dispute Resolution Arbitration No. 08-01188 Award Page 6 of 6

Eight (8) Hearing sessions @ \$1,125.00

Hearing Dates:

April 13, 2009

2 sessions

April 14, 2009 April 15, 2009

2 sessions 2 sessions

April 16, 2009

2 sessions

Total Hearing Session Fees

=\$14,850.00

=\$9,000.00

- The Panel has assessed \$11,137.50 of the hearing session fees jointly and severally to Claimants.
- 2. The Panel has assessed \$3,712.50 of the hearing session fees to Respondent.

All balances are payable to FINRA Dispute Resolution and are due upon receipt.

# **ARBITRATION PANEL**

J. Maxwell Williams

Public Arbitrator, Presiding Chairperson

Earle Park Kelley

Public Arbitrator

Richard David Schultz

Non-Public Arbitrator

# Concurring Arbitrators' Signatures

JmWallans

J. Maxwell Williams

Public Arbitrator, Presiding Chairperson

04-23-2009

Signature Date

Earle Park Keiley

Public Arbitrator

Signature Date

Richard David Schultz Non-Public Arbitrator

Signature Date