

**Statement by JSS Barristers regarding the  
Calgary Stampede Foundation's Response to the Sentencing of Philip Heerema**

**CALGARY** (May 3, 2018) – On May 2, 2018 Philip Heerema was sentenced to 10 years in prison for sex offences involving a number of underage members of the Young Canadians – a well known performance group of the Calgary Stampede Foundation. During the sentencing process, Court of Queen's Bench Justice Larry Ackert referred to Mr. Heerema's conduct as being morally despicable, and that Mr. Heerema seriously, and repeatedly, violated his position of trust.

The impact of Mr. Heerema's conduct on the victims of his abuse has been devastating. The young men who came forward to their families and to police are heroes. Some of those young men testified at Mr. Heerema's criminal trial, which was intensely difficult for them.

Unfortunately, the Calgary Stampede Foundation has responded to these events with public statements emphasizing the support they say that they provided to victims following Mr. Heerema's arrest, and the improvements they say they have made since then.

JSS Barristers represents the victims of Mr. Heerema's abuse in a class action proceeding commenced against Mr. Heerema and the Calgary Stampede Foundation. A copy of the Statement of Claim in that action is available here:

<http://www.jsbarristers.ca/files/pdf/AMSOC.pdf>

The Statement of Claim alleges that the Young Canadians (including the Calgary Stampede Foundation) are legally responsible for Mr. Heerema's conduct in part because of: "the close and intimate relationship between Heerema and the Class Members fostered and encouraged by the Young Canadians..." The Statement of Claim alleges that the Young Canadians created the risk that allowed Mr. Heerema to engage in his abusive and criminal conduct.

The Statement of Claim also alleges that the Young Canadians had actual knowledge of some of Mr. Heerema's inappropriate conduct: "as a result of one or more complaints made by one or more faculty members... Notwithstanding this actual knowledge, the Young Canadians failed to adequately investigate Heerema's conduct, failed to supervise Heerema adequately or at all, and failed to protect the Class Members from Heerema."

Carsten Jensen, QC – counsel for the Class Members at JSS Barristers, responded to the Calgary Stampede Foundation's statements regarding the sentencing of Mr. Heerema, saying:

“I am very disappointed that the Stampede has responded to the sentencing of Mr. Heerema by asserting that they provided support to the young victims after Mr. Heerema’s arrest. We expect the evidence to establish that the Stampede did not provide them with appropriate support and assistance, including the counselling that they needed and that they continue to need.”

Mr. Jensen continued, “A number of our clients have been utterly devastated, and they have ongoing needs for support that have simply not been met. Some of our clients have received no support from the Calgary Stampede Foundation.”

Mr. Jensen concluded, “The Stampede’s response avoids taking responsibility for its own failure to protect our clients left in their care, and for the actions of its own senior employee.”

JSS Barristers encourages Mr. Heerema’s victims to come forward confidentially to be part of the class action process against Mr. Heerema and the Calgary Stampede Foundation.

JSS Barristers will not be making further comment on this matter at this time.

Carsten Jensen, Q.C, FCI Arb  
Phone: 403-571-1526  
Email: jensenc@jssbarristers.ca

Kajal Ervin  
Phone: 403-571-0745  
Email: ervink@jssbarristers.ca