



10/14/12

489 Newbet Rd.

452 Lyburn, H.U. 25632

Honorable Shelley C. Chapman

One Bowling Green

Courtroom 621

New York, New York 10004-1408

Your Honor,

I know you have received many letters from coal miners and retirees concerning the change of venue motion to move the bankruptcy case from New York To Charleston, H.U..

I do not presume you know nothing about coal mining or how it affects coal miners and their families. I would, however, like to tell you a little about my husband and my family and how it has affected us.

I was 18 and he was 24 when we married. He worked for a construction company. West Virginia weather is unpredictable. When it rained or snowed, work was halted. The job was low paying and carried no insurance.

After three years of marriage our first child was born. With no insurance, very low income and a child to care for, our lives changed. My husband took a job in the coal mines when our daughter was 6 months old.

He now had insurance, more money to live on and a more comfortable lifestyle.

I "hated" coal mining. Day in and day out, year after year I watched my husband leave home for work, I, always wondering if he would come back. He would come home so covered in coal dust, he was hard to recognize. I prepared his lunch every day and always put far too much for one meal. Always done with the thought, if he gets trapped under those mountains, he will have some extra food.

Instead of looking forward to the beauty of the fall color changes in our mountains, it only added to my worries. Cold weather poses a higher risk of methane gas build up inside coal mines.

Mines have been overcome with methane gas and died. Explosions have happened and men have died.

My husband worked 8, 10 and 12 hour shifts inside those mines. A lot of those shifts were crawling on his knees. Miles under these mountains, in the blackest dark man could know, except for the little lights on their miners hats and on the mining equipment.

Water seeped through cracks over his head. Sounds like thunder was something he got used to. It was the mountains slowly sitting down. The air was full of a haze of coal dust and rock dust. Rock dust was scattered to try to keep the risk down of a spark from the equipment causing a fire. There in this atmosphere he had his lunch. Rats were a common site down in that hole, even an occasional skunk.

My husband worked on, year after year. Never knowing just how much I worried. Two more children blessed our lives. School and college for them was a priority, so on he worked.

He worked when he was well, he worked when he wasn't able to work. When he retired he had been working 6 days a week, many of which were 12 hour shifts.

After 37 years of hard work, he was eligible for retirement. He retired from Arch Coal Co. with the full understanding he would have a well earned pension and lifetime health care for me and himself.

Contract after contract between Arch Coal Co. and U.M.W.A., the promise that a separate fund was set aside for our pension and health care. This fund was separate and apart from other assets of the Coal Co.

We both are under medical care, our health has deteriorated through the years. There is no way we could afford the doctor bills and prescription costs on our own.

We, the little people, who worked and made the coal barons rich, mean nothing to them.

This is just my way of letting you see a touch of this side of decisions that have been placed before you.

Please forgive my poor handwriting, and thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Myrtle Purice