



A LEGAL HOSTAGE

A court-ordered guardianship nearly shattered the life of Kise Davis, in a trend that now too often leads to isolation and exploitation of older Americans **By Kenneth Miller**

LARRY DAVIS TRIED HIS BEST TO HELP HIS STEPMOTHER, but distance made it difficult. Davis lived with his wife in Sonoma County, California; Kise (pronounced KEE'-say) Davis lived in Las Cruces, New Mexico, 1,200 miles away. She was struggling with dementia, and Larry—who held power of attorney over her affairs—spoke with her regularly, kept tabs on her through local contacts and visited as often as he could. He was working toward moving her to an assisted living facility near his home.

That began to seem more urgent in the fall of 2016, when Kise, then 85, began complaining that a longtime acquaintance, Larry Franco—a handyman who helped her with household tasks—was stealing from her. But Kise's illness sometimes made her paranoid; she'd lodged such accusations against friends before. Larry, who was 74, planned to fly out and investigate after the holidays. Then, shortly before Christmas, he came home from a shopping trip to learn that Kise had gone missing.

"This is Kise's neighbor Donnie," said the voice on the answering machine. "I thought you should know that a van just came and took her to some kind of institution."

Terrified that harm had come to Kise, Larry called Franco and demanded to know what was going on. "I got in over my head," Franco told him. He explained that Kise had transferred her power of attorney (POA) to him, then turned suspicious and hostile. Franco's lawyer had advised him that the best way to ensure Kise was properly cared for was to petition a judge to appoint a professional guardian, who would take over legal responsibility for her well-being.

Kise's newly appointed guardian, a company called Advocate Services of Las Cruces, had placed her in a dementia-care facility by order of the court. It took Larry more than a week to reach her there. When they finally spoke, on Christmas Eve, she seemed to believe she'd booked herself a room, though now they wouldn't let her go. "They've put me in an insane asylum," she told him, weeping. "Please come and get me out of here."

Larry was furious that no one had informed him before letting strangers lock her away, but he assumed he could quickly set things right.

He was wrong.

AN ESTIMATED 1.3 MILLION adults are under guardianship in this country, perhaps 85 percent of them over 65. The court-ordered supervision, designed to ensure that mentally or physically incapacitated people are cared for and protected, can be partial (often

covering only finances and known as a conservatorship) or full. For full guardianship, a judge transfers the individual's civil rights—including the right to sign contracts, make medical decisions, and choose with whom to associate and where to live—to the guardian. The most common arrangement is for the judge to appoint a family member, who may draw on the person's estate to cover approved expenses. If there is no available or

appropriate family member, a professional or company may be appointed. The professional can charge the estate to handle the client's affairs and to pay for necessary services, with court approval.

In most instances, experts say, guardians perform conscientiously and their clients benefit. Still, in an unknown number of cases, a guardianship can go disastrously wrong. A 2010 federal report identified hundreds of allegations of abuse, exploitation or neglect by guardians over 20 years. Although family members committed the majority of these misdeeds, the crimes that usually make headlines are those of professional guardians. Last year saw a bumper crop. The owner of a Las Vegas guardianship company was indicted on more than 200 felony charges for allegedly bilking more than 150 people out of their life savings. In New Mexico the two owners of Ayudando Guardians Inc.—along with one

owner's husband and son—were arrested for conspiracy, fraud, theft and money laundering in connection with an alleged plot to embezzle \$4 million from clients' trust accounts. The CEO of another Albuquerque-based company, Desert State Life Management, pleaded guilty to wire fraud and money laundering; he faces eight to 12 years in prison and must pay \$4.8 million in restitution to more than 70 special-needs clients.

Yet even guardianships that fall within the letter of the law can wreak emotional and financial devastation. Although all those involved may think their motives and actions are honorable—as in the case of Kise Davis—the slow, costly workings of the court system can cause untold confusion and pain. Moreover, activists charge that in some cases, unscrupulous professional guardians have turned legally sanctioned exploitation into a cottage industry, abetted by greedy attorneys and pliable judges. "The people who are supposed to solve the ward's and family's problems instead profit enormously from creating a whole bunch of new ones," says physician Sam Sugar, founder of Americans Against Abusive Probate Guardianship.

Testifying in April 2018 before a U.S. Senate committee, Nina Kohn, a law professor at Syracuse University and a

'They've put me in an insane asylum,' Kise said, weeping. 'Please come and get me out of here.'

principal drafter of the Uniform Guardianship, Conservatorship, and Other Protective Arrangements Act (a model law designed for adoption by any state), laid out an array of problems with the U.S. guardianship system. One issue, she told the legislators, is that “a subset of guardians act in ways that violate the rights and insult the humanity of those they serve,” whether intentionally, negligently or through inadequate training. Advocacy groups (including AARP) have struggled for decades to repair the gaps in the country’s patchwork of guardianship laws. Lately, there have been signs of progress. But as Larry Davis learned when his stepmother landed in a locked unit, there’s still a long way to go.

BORN IN JAPAN, Kise had fallen in love with Larry’s father, an Army translator, when he was a new divorcee stationed in her country; Larry traveled from San Diego to meet her shortly after their wedding, in 1956, when he was 14. Tiny, vivacious and artistic, Kise was only 11 years his senior, and he saw her as a kindred spirit: “She’s a strong personality,”

he says. “She’s very attached to doing things her way.”

Larry credits Kise with repairing the frayed bond between him and his dad. He stayed with the couple often after they moved to the U.S.—first at White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico; then in Newport Beach, California, where Kise opened a dress shop, selling her own designs; and finally in Las Cruces, where she remained after becoming widowed in 1993.

When Kise first began having memory problems, in 2014, Larry took her to her doctor, who ran tests that showed mild cognitive impairment. Kise drove Larry to a lawyer’s office, where she gave Larry power of attorney. Kise had long spoken of moving to Sonoma, near Larry, when she could no longer care for herself; for now, though, she insisted on staying put. At 82, she was still sharp witted, eager to greet customers at the silk-flower stall she ran at the farmers market on weekends. Larry, a retired educator with a doctorate in cultural psychology, knew that pushing too hard could push her away. So he flew home and checked in frequently.

As Kise’s condition worsened, Larry had to intervene more often. In 2015 she abruptly transferred power of

attorney to a woman friend. Then she began complaining that the friend was stealing her possessions. After the sheriff’s department determined that the items—including a pistol, which could not be found—had actually been misplaced, Larry came for another visit and regained her POA. He asked Adult Protective Services (APS) to assess whether Kise could safely continue to live on her own; she passed

the evaluation, though the agent suggested she get some help. Larry hired a home care service to come in weekly. But Kise soon canceled the contract, saying it was a waste of money.

In June 2016, Larry returned to Las Cruces and took Kise to a geriatric physician, who diagnosed her with moderate dementia and recommended that she give up driving. Larry straightened out Kise’s checkbook, taxes and overdue bills; he interviewed several elder care companies, but she rejected them all. Before leaving town, he asked her neighbors to call him if anything seemed amiss. Back in Sonoma, Larry and his wife, Marcia, began looking for a nearby assisted living residence that would fit Kise’s needs.

Not long afterward, Kise told Larry that the other Larry in her life, Larry Franco, had begun helping her with daily tasks. At Franco’s request, APS reevaluated her; the agency again concluded that she could live on her own. Soon after—without telling her stepson—she transferred her POA to Franco. But by November, she was claiming that Franco was stealing from her. Her stepson promised to visit again after Christmas, when he planned to broach the idea of moving.

Then, on December 16, he learned that Kise had been hauled off and shut away.

In the days after she became a client of Advocate Services, Larry Davis made countless calls to try to free her from custody and move her to California. When he spoke to company owner Sandy Meyer, he says, she told him she thought he wasn’t involved in Kise’s life—even though she had met him when he was researching home care services. (In an email to me, Meyer wrote: “Mr. Davis called us that evening before we even had the opportunity to call him. He spoke with another guardian in the office Friday night and spent a half-hour yelling at me on Saturday morning, not even letting me have a chance to respond.”) He spoke with



‘The lawyers on the other side are up in arms, saying you’re trying to take Kise out.’

Franco's attorney, Jill Johnson Vigil, who said she'd also been unaware that he was an interested party; because he was not related to Kise by blood or adoption, he learned, no one had been legally obligated to notify him. He sought guidance from legal experts and Alzheimer's disease advocates, who told him to prepare for a protracted fight.

The other side, in fact, was already depicting him as a villain. As it later emerged, Kise had been telling Franco tales about her stepson similar to those she'd been telling her stepson about Franco. The handyman's secondhand impressions of Larry Davis were reflected in the temporary guardianship petition that Franco's lawyer, Johnson Vigil, had filed with the state District Court. Larry was described only as someone who'd previously held Kise's power of attorney, not as a family member; the document claimed he "took no protective action for Ms. Davis," even though he had been advised by Kise's doctor that she "needed to be placed in a facility." (Larry Davis denies he'd been given such advice. Both of Kise's doctors declined to comment for this article, citing patient privacy law.) Due to Kise's cognitive problems, paranoia and possible possession of a firearm, there was "a likelihood of immediate and irreparable harm" unless she was assigned a guardian on an emergency basis, the petition asserted.

In New Mexico and some other states, petitioners for guardianship can request specific professionals to handle the case. In addition to Advocate Services (the most prominent of the handful of guardianship companies in Las Cruces), Johnson Vigil asked the court to appoint a lawyer she'd often worked with in such cases, CaraLyn Banks, as Kise's attorney and guardian ad litem—responsible for protecting Kise's legal interests. Banks, Larry learned from other lawyers, was known for her skill at fending off family members who contested guardianships in which she was involved.

District Court Judge James T. Martin, who knew the players from previous appearances, granted Johnson Vigil's request. The next step would be a hearing to determine whether the guardianship should become permanent. In order to secure Kise's release, Larry would have to convince the judge—against the arguments of the home team—that she would be better off in his care.

HOWEVER THEY begin, bad professional guardianships tend to be devilishly hard to get out of—and sometimes end tragically. Take the case of retired banker Denise Tighe, who fell under guardianship in 2012 after exhibiting symptoms of delirium during a bladder infection. After she was dragged screaming to a nursing home in Weatherford, Texas, her friend Virginia Pritchett found her lying on a mattress on the floor. "She was a wealthy lady who could have afforded 24-hour home help," says Pritchett, who, along with other loved ones, was soon prevented from seeing her. "When her birthday came up, I called and said, 'Can I bring her a gift?' They said no." Pritchett unsuccessfully fought

state and local governments on Tighe's behalf, but Tighe died in the institution, after two years of enforced solitude.

Dysfunctional professional guardianships often have common traits. An elderly person with no nearby relatives may begin showing signs of dementia or develop a medical condition that temporarily clouds her mind, and someone—APS, a concerned neighbor, a hospital administrator—petitions the local court to appoint a guardian. Or a relative may petition to become a guardian, but a judge rules that a professional would be more appropriate. Or two relatives file petitions, and the judge resolves the conflict by appointing a professional.

The guardian then moves the person to a nursing home or other supervised facility, even though she may still be capable of living at home or have friends or family members willing to care for her. Those loved ones are falsely portrayed as negligent or malicious and are often restricted or banned from contact with the person under guardianship. The person may be drugged, ostensibly for therapeutic reasons but perhaps also to ensure docility and skew cognitive tests. The guardian enriches himself and his collaborators by selling the person's property (thus making more cash available) and billing her for a dizzying range of services—including defending the guardianship in court if the family contests it. "The lawyers can't make it to the bank fast enough," says Elaine Renoire, president of the National Association to Stop Guardian Abuse.

Still, troublesome guardianships don't always arise from malice. "Guardianship cases are typically messy, because they occur when there's been a breakdown in other systems," observes Syracuse law professor Kohn. Well-meaning family members can make questionable decisions; vulnerable

Here's How to Avoid a Bad Guardianship

Careful planning can ensure that you'll have a say in who will look after you if you ever need help.



Make peace with your loved ones.

Judges often appoint professional guardians when families are feuding, so try to make up before problems escalate. Whatever the cost, it will likely be cheaper than a professional guardian.



Power up. Create one durable power of attorney for finances and another for medical care. One person can fill both roles, and you can also name your POA designee as your guardian of choice.



Instruct. Explain to your designee how to do the job (good

sources are consumerfinance.gov/managing-someone-elses-money and guardianship.org/standards).



Trust, but verify.

In your POA document, create checks and balances by requiring your appointee to provide a periodic accounting to another trusted friend or relative.

adults can say contradictory things. Those in the guardian's camp may sincerely believe they're doing the right thing.

"I saw this case as an example of what happens when family members do not fulfill their fiduciary duties to an elderly relative who is in need of assistance, and the court is asked to step in," Banks told me in an email. "Mr. Davis' conduct before the court proceeding was filed was a concern to everyone involved."

Nonetheless, Kise's case illustrates that the system—to a degree that varies state by state, even district by district—has deep structural flaws. It can reward those on the guardian's side for taking a harsher view of the person's loved ones than may be justified and for resisting efforts at compromise. It lacks mechanisms to ensure accountability or to reduce conflict. As a result, it too often seems to confirm family members' sense that the deck is stacked against them.

IN JANUARY 2017, Larry and Marcia flew to Las Cruces and hired an attorney, elder-law specialist Cristy Carbón-Gaul. Then they drove to the facility where Kise was being held, Haciendas at Grace Village. Kise was housed in a locked unit for residents with severe dementia, most of whom could barely communicate. The place was clean and airy, but Larry thought Kise looked haggard and unkempt. "They told me I could go home on Monday," she let him know, "so I packed my bag and waited. But then they said the next day, and the next. They think I'll forget."

Halfway through the visit, Larry got a call from Carbón-Gaul: "The lawyers on the other side are up in arms, saying you're trying to take Kise out." Apparently, a Haciendas staffer had called someone to ask if the Davises could take Kise to lunch, raising suspicions of an escape plan. Larry says he had no such plan, but the misunderstanding cost him and Kise hundreds of dollars in fees paid to their respective attorneys.

A few days later, Larry spoke again with Franco; after comparing notes, they realized that Kise had been making delusional claims about each man to the other. Franco and Johnson Vigil told the judge they wanted Kise to go to California with Larry. But now Banks objected, citing her responsibility to protect Kise's interests.

A hearing was set for February 20 but was canceled due

to a missing doctor's report. Banks, however, produced a 17-page paper describing the perilous state of Kise's affairs—including clutter throughout the house, rotting food in the fridge and a dead cat in the freezer—and put the blame squarely on her stepson. Larry had abdicated his duty "to protect Kise from herself and others," Banks wrote. As evidence, she cited his failure to supply Kise with home care and his repeated loss of power of attorney (both of which, Larry notes, resulted from Kise's actions, not his own). She also accused Larry of "agitating" Kise by discussing her case; Larry says he was simply treating her like an adult.

Larry yearned to tell his side of the story in court, but Carbón-Gaul warned that would be useless; Judge Martin, she said, had little patience for such back-and-forth. Frustrated, Larry added a new attorney to the team: Peter Goodman, a retired business lawyer he'd met at the farmers market; his knowledge of Japanese culture seemed like a potential asset. At the next hearing, in March, Goodman presented an issue that Larry had discussed with Banks and that Banks herself had mentioned in her report: the possibility that if Kise's dementia eventually left her unable to communicate in English, she would do better at a facility—like one Larry had found in Sonoma—where some of the residents spoke Japanese. To Larry's delight, Judge Martin agreed, though he suggested it "would be better" if Kise remained under a professional guardianship after relocating to California. He ordered both parties to cooperate in trying to arrange such a move within 120 days.

But at a hearing in April, Banks raised another roadblock. Memory-care facilities in California, she said, were more expensive than those in New Mexico. In order to ensure that Kise—whose assets totaled about \$300,000—didn't run out of money, it would be necessary to sell her house. The property didn't go on the market until June, and it sat there for months. (In an email, Banks explained that the contents had to be inventoried and sold off, and repairs made to the structure, before the house could be sold.)

Meanwhile, Kise languished. Although she'd been transferred to a new unit, the other residents were still far more debilitated than she was; she spent most of her time reading in her room. (In a court hearing, her case manager testified that Kise was offered a room in the highest-functioning unit

Change Is Coming

Since 2012, AARP has played a key role in supporting more than 200 new laws and other guardianship reforms across the country, such as:

AARP Montana assisted in passing a bill that created the Montana Working Interdisciplinary Network of Guardianship Stakeholders, a court-community partnership to identify and help address problems with the state's guardianship system.

AARP Texas helped prepare consumer-friendly guides in English and Spanish to inform financial caregivers of their responsibilities. They've also helped create a less restrictive alternative to guardianship, a supported decision-making agreement.

AARP Nevada is a member of the Nevada Supreme Court Guardianship Commission. In March 2018 the commission's efforts led the court to establish a toll-free hotline to help protect vulnerable adults from guardianship abuse and exploitation.

AARP Connecticut worked with state courts and others to adopt formal practice standards for guardians, including ethical considerations, fiduciary duties and handling challenging family dynamics. They also created a guardian-training module.

when one opened up, yet refused to go. Kise and Larry both deny this.) Friends sometimes visited, but she was forbidden to leave the building. Goodman recalls sitting with her as another resident watched a TV show for schoolkids; the woman asked Kise if she was one of the characters: “Kise looks at me and says, ‘You don’t get smarter in here.’”

As the 120-day deadline came and went, Advocate Services made it clear who was in control. When Larry suggested reducing Kise’s dosage of a sleep aid that could exacerbate dementia, he says, her case manager told him—correctly—that only the guardian could decide on medical issues. When attorney Goodman provided a list of items that Kise wanted to take to California, the case manager emailed: “This behavior is to stop now—no more talking about taking anything.” And when Goodman asked the manager about the state of Kise’s finances, she scolded him for wasting her time and thereby increasing the fees charged to the estate. “You’ll find out about her assets,” she wrote, “upon her death.”

The case manager, who no longer works for Advocate Services, declined to comment for this article. Company owner Meyer, however, blames Larry and his team for the conflicts. “We performed our duties in the best interest of Kise Davis, and her reported wishes to us,” she emailed me. “Unfortunately, Mr. Larry Davis felt that we had gone behind his back....

We always make every attempt to work with family members in a collaborative effort to meet the ward’s needs.... [This case] became contentious not due to our actions.”

KISE’S HOUSE FINALLY sold in November 2017. At Goodman’s suggestion, Larry hired a pair of experienced guardianship litigators to fight the next phase of the battle—trying to make sure that Kise’s transfer, which Judge Martin had called for back in March, was carried out. But the next hearing was canceled when the judge had a scheduling conflict, and the case continued to go nowhere.

By then, guardianship in New Mexico was under extreme scrutiny, thanks in part to an investigative series by the *Albuquerque Journal* (which later ran an extensively reported story by Colleen Heild on Kise’s plight), as well as the Ayudando and Desert State Life embezzlement outrages. A commission convened by the state Supreme Court was

developing proposals for regulatory reform. Legislators introduced a comprehensive bill (strongly backed by AARP New Mexico) to overhaul state guardianship rules, which passed in a stripped-down version in February 2018. The new law did make some improvements: Among other things, it required court hearings, formerly closed, to be open to the public, and a wider range of family members to be notified of a pending guardianship (which might have enabled Larry to intervene earlier). But a provision that would have established a statewide record-keeping system for guardianship, crafted to prevent embezzlement and to rein in excessive charges, was rejected as too expensive.

Since guardianship scandals erupted in the news 31 years ago, similar scenarios have played out across the country. “States pass pretty laws, but there’s no meat on the bones,” says Bernard Krooks, a past president of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys. Monitoring and enforcement mechanisms are often inadequate, as are provisions for training guardians in the rules they’re supposed to follow.

That’s beginning to change. In 2011 the National Guardianship Network (a coalition of organizations, including AARP, dedicated to improving guardianship law and practice) launched a project known as Working Interdisciplinary Networks of Guardianship Stakeholders, or WINGS—a collaboration of courts, government agencies and civic groups in 25 states that’s working to reform guardianship systems. And Congress, last October, passed the Elder Abuse Prevention and Prosecution Act, which includes a section calling for the establishment of programs to assess the workings of state guardianship systems, to develop recommendations for improvement and to establish guardianship-oversight demonstration programs nationwide. (For more on state reform, see “Change Is Coming,” opposite). But effective oversight requires good information, and most states still fall grievously short regarding this.

“We don’t really know how many guardianships there are, let alone how many are going well and how many are problematic,” says Diana Noel, a senior legislative representative for AARP. This year, the *Albuquerque Journal* found that Advocate Services—the guardian for Kise—had failed to file annual reports for 50 or more cases going back to 1990. “We did get behind, and we’re catching (CONTINUED ON PAGE 90)



‘It’s like going to heaven,’ says Kise of her new residence.

KEEPING UP

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 61

eight kids. His biggest expense is airline tickets. “We had a tour bus, but it conked out. I burned the clutch traveling from Ohio to Houston.” His debt is around \$15,000, for a car loan.

>How he earned it “I’ve got six girls and two boys, ranging from age 28 to 52, and I trained them all to sing. A few of my 19 grandkids, too. So we’ve been blessed to get to travel to over 500 cities in the U.S. and nine countries. We’ve performed for 50,000 people at a festival in Germany; we’ve played with Earth, Wind & Fire; Mavis Staples; and Coldplay. The money’s up and down. We might get \$4,500 for 90 minutes of gospel—sometimes more, sometimes less. The true reward is to bring peace to people’s hearts.”

>The meaning of money “At this point, I’m happy I’m not starving or living outside. The best investment I ever made was in my children. Teaching them to play, to sing, to utilize their God-given talents to the fullest. I don’t have enough money, yet I don’t worry about it. I say to myself, *You work hard and use money wisely and show decent common sense, you’ll get by.* More money doesn’t equal happiness. We weren’t rich growing up, though we ate regularly, slept on clean sheets and had the basic necessities. Being greedy for more than that usually leads to trouble and sin.”



THE HAPPY CAMPERS

Edie Jones, 80, and Ted Jones, 86



Retired summer-camp owners

>Annual income \$66,000 from combined pensions and Social Security

>Retirement strategy “Now’s the time to spend some of the money we worked so hard to earn,” Edie says. “We’ve been careful enough for long

enough. We know we won’t outlive our savings.”

>The upkeep After a recent refinance, the Joneses pay \$1,086 a month on a \$200,000 mortgage on a vacation property, plus another monthly home equity loan payment of \$660. It’s their only debt. They occasionally dip into an investment account worth around \$87,000 to make the payments. Friends who stay at the vacation house are asked to make a donation of \$150 a night. The Joneses’ 2004 Prius has more than 200,000 miles on it; most of the time they drive their 2014 Subaru Forester.

>How they earned it “We’ve been married for 56 years,” Edie notes. “In our prime earning decades, Ted was the branch manager for Johnson’s Temperature Control in Kentucky. I worked for the Girl Scouts. We moved to Oregon to buy a children’s summer camp and managed that together for 11 years before we sold it; at the same time, I was the executive director of a nonprofit parent-children program. Now we live off our pensions and Social Security, which barely covers our expenses.”

>The meaning of money “In a way, money has become inconsequential,” she says. “As long as you have just enough to feel comfortable, you don’t have to worry,” she says. “We have four children who went to good schools. That was where most of our money went, but it was money well spent. One has a Ph.D.; another has a master’s. They all do well. We live on six acres out in the country. The people on the east side put up a beautiful log fence that borders our driveway. The people west of us built an equally attractive log fence. We thought that a log fence would be nice on our property, too. Writing the check, we laughed and said, ‘Wait a minute. It’s the neighbors who are supposed to be keeping up with the Joneses, not the other way around!’” ■

GUARDIAN ABUSE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 69

up,” Sandy Meyer told the paper. Such laxity and lack of follow-up by authorities are not uncommon among guardians nationwide.

ON FEBRUARY 26, 2018, 11 months after he ruled that Kise should be moved to California, Judge Martin held another hearing. Larry testified, describing his close relationship with Kise and his efforts to ensure her well-being. Franco and two of Kise’s friends spoke as well. They all agreed that living near her family would be in Kise’s best interest. Banks disagreed, but the judge said he’d intended for Kise to be moved soon after his original order and was “disappointed” that she hadn’t been. He appointed Larry as Kise’s guardian and ordered that she be transferred promptly.

The next day, Larry gave Kise the good news: After more than a year of captivity, she was going home with them. “You saved my life,” she told him. At first she moved into Larry and Marcia’s home in Sonoma. Then, when a space became available, she relocated to an assisted living residence, where the activities include gardening, musical performances and outings. Kise’s loved ones can visit anytime, and she can visit them. “This is a nice place,” she says. “It’s like going to heaven.”

At 87, Kise is physically healthy, and Larry hopes she’ll remain so. But her freedom came at a considerable cost. He spent more than \$50,000 on legal bills and other expenses; the charges to Kise’s estate during her ordeal are expected to top \$140,000. And that’s not counting the existential toll.

“They took 14 of Kise’s last months away from her and made it a nightmare,” says Larry, who testified before New Mexico’s guardianship commission at last year’s hearings. “It was like a hostage situation. No one should have to go through what happened to us.” ■

AARP The Magazine (ISSN-1541-9894; USPS 357-600) is published bimonthly by AARP, 601 E St. NW, Washington, DC 20049. One membership includes spouse/partner. Annual membership dues are \$16, including \$4.03 for an annual subscription to AARP The Magazine and \$3.09 for an annual subscription to AARP Bulletin. A three-year membership is \$43; a five-year membership is \$63. Dues outside domestic U.S. mail limits: \$17/year for Canada/Mexico; \$28 for other international countries. Periodicals postage paid at Washington, D.C., and additional mailing offices. Canadian Publications Mail agreement #40036043. Canadian return address: 2744 Edna St., Windsor, Ontario N8Y 1V2. POSTMASTER: Send address changes for AARP The Magazine c/o AARP, P.O. Box 199, Long Beach, CA 90801. AARP assumes no responsibility for unsolicited manuscripts or other materials submitted for review. AARP The Magazine, AARP, the AARP logo design, Movies for Grownups and TV for Grownups are all registered trademarks of AARP. Entire contents Copyright © 2018 by AARP. All rights reserved under the Berne and Pan American copyright conventions. Reproduction in whole or part without written permission prohibited. Printed by LSC Communications, Mattoon, Illinois.