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10/13/2009

Re: FTC & AG's "False Advertising" Complaint Against Franklin Bronze Plaques

Robert Barber
President, Franklin Bronze & Alloy Co.
191 Howard Street, Franklin, PA 16323
Website: <http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com>

Bob“:”

Please see enclosed Complaint Update, now posted. I've concluded that Franklin Bronze Plaques does manufacturer cast plaques...and those only. That would exclude the Donor Recognition Trees, ImageCast™, AlumaColor™, (Matthews Bronze) MetalPhotos™ (Metal Photo Service), & Memorial Grave Markers (Centec). FBP's scant attributions provided for those—if any—are merely easily-overlooked parenthetical inclusions. If you were more internet/industry-savvy, you'd know people hate reading websites to begin with; they're certainly not going to spend much time reading or figuring out what (“This is a registered trademark of...”) means to & for them. Once it's established in their minds that someone's a manufacturer, the presumption is, they make everything offered.

My reasons for seriously doubting FBP made ANYTHING were two-fold:

1): Please see enclosed “Town of Withheld” item. It states in part: “I've dealt with FB's Cynthia Linnon/President directly on several occasions. She once “informed” me that a Flat Relief portrait they had posted was actually a Bas relief; apples & oranges and very easy to know the difference. She was adamant about it and offered: “That was done by a sculptor just down the road.” I communicated with Bernie/plant manager about it and she of course confirmed it was a Flat Relief image. Cynthia's also offered: “As far as Metal Photo goes we do recommend it for indoors simply because it can scratch with outdoor use.” To which I replied: “EVERYTHING “ can scratch with outdoor use “...or INDOOR USE for that matter.” With all that—including the fact that she doesn't know how to size text for a cast plaque in practical terms, as well as her uninformed “Newsletter” — I was in disbelief that Franklin Bronze Plaques was an actual manufacturing facility. “Go figger.” “Who-da-thunk-it?” As you will see, sometime ago I replied to her “Newsletter”, disabusing her of several mistakes of hers. That's likely what you referred to when emailing: “because of the un-couth, vulgar, and prejudicial manner that you have used against Cynthia and Bernie”. Bob, I rank stupidity right up there with lying as “un-couth & vulgar”. As dysfunctional as FBP is, it took a leap of faith to believe FBP actually makes anything.


2): FBP liberally used—and still does to a lesser extent—others' work as it's own before this, leading me to believe FBP didn't even cast. All but one of FBP's Design Options images still reflect the work of Gemini (<http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com/options.html?op=Standard%20Borders>) and Matthews Bronze ([http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com/options.html?op=Specialty Borders](http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com/options.html?op=Specialty%20Borders), [http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com/options.html?op=Standard Background Colors](http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com/options.html?op=Standard%20Background%20Colors), [http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com/options.html?op=Custom Background Colors](http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com/options.html?op=Custom%20Background%20Colors), <http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com/options.html?op=Textures>, & <http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com/options.html?op=Mountings>). With the POSSIBLE exception of "The Galena Building", FBP made NONE of the plaques on its Homepage: <http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com/> Found elsewhere on Franklin Bronze Plaques for instance, Matthews Bronze actually cast these plaques: <http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com/memorials-big.html?pid=132> & <http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com/plaques-big.html?pid=283> and they're not the "image cast plaques" you referred to.

You went into this online plaque enterprise "with eyes wide shut" in '06. Acquiring a copy of FrontPage is a single step of several. You hired someone with limited marketing skills and lesser knowledge of the industry and named her "President". You thought perhaps that as you make "something" it would be OK to imply that you make everything. You'll never have the industry knowledge that I do. Here are my recommendations for FBP:

- 1) Pull all project images that FBP didn't actually do. Merely because Matthews "is just down the road from us" has no bearing on the fact FBP is taking credit for someone else's work. Where you—or they—are located is irrelevant. What was your rationale—if any—for ever posting Gemini images (though most except ADA are now gone)?
- 2) Get busy with someone making your OWN specification & option diagrams & examples. FBP is still using a Gemini image for its "cast aluminum" example.
- 3) For the products you don't make—which are the several listed above—provide attribution sans "parenthesis" and provide one at all for those you now don't: Recognition Trees (Matthews), MetalPhotos™ (Metal Photo Service), & Memorial Grave Markers (Centec).
- 4) Don't have an "Etched Plaque" page at all; FBP doesn't etch plaques. If you want to offer that as a Portrait Option, a likely—and honest—spot would be here: <http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com/options.html?op=Portraits>
- 5) Remove all mention of offering "Bronze Letters" (unless you want to sub it out & say so). It's currently posted on <http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com/products.html> ... a line which you revealed you weren't even aware of offering. It's also referenced on FBP's Testimonials page: <http://www.franklinbronzeplaques.com/testimonials.html>

You're a "manufacturer" of plaques? Then act like one. "Hope this Helps."

A "salesman with a web-site",



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