

Montgomery, Larmoyeux spat continues

Lawyer **Chris Larmoyeux** has lost his bid to collect \$41.5 million in tobacco fees from his former law partner, personal injury titan **Bob Montgomery**. But Larmoyeux and Montgomery aren't through duking it out over dollars.

Now Montgomery will go after Larmoyeux over the nearly dozen cases he took with him when Montgomery fired him a year ago.

Montgomery says the West Palm Beach lawyers' partnership agreement requires Larmoyeux to give Montgomery 80 percent of the fees collected in those cases, many of which are multimillion-dollar lawsuits, including the claim of youngster **Austin Delgado** of Palm Beach County.



**Alexandra
Clough**

Austin was hurt while trying to get off Epcot's Spaceship Earth ride in 1999, when he was 5 years old.

Several cases have been settled, Montgomery says, but he hasn't received a dime.

An arbitration hearing on the matter is expected soon.

Beyond that is yet another dispute: the money Montgomery paid to win the arbitration fight over tobacco fees. Montgomery says he spent between \$600,000 and \$1 million on experts and to pay his lawyer, **Jim Beasley** of West Palm Beach.

Montgomery will ask a judge to force Larmoyeux to pay.

The ex-partners' initial fight stems from Montgomery's \$206 million fee for representing the state in its successful lawsuit against tobacco companies.

In 1998, flush from his victory, Montgomery agreed to give Larmoyeux 25 percent of the tobacco fee after paying down some of the firm's debt.

But even with all that cash flowing to the firm, the partners still fought over money, especially the firm's debt.

Montgomery finally got fed up and fired Larmoyeux in December 2000.

How could Montgomery fire his partner? Easy.

than a decade allowed Montgomery to fire Larmoyeux will with no payout from the firm, said Beasley, Montgomery's lawyer.

The seemingly lopsided agreement recognized Montgomery's long record of attracting, and winning, lucrative personal injury cases. Larmoyeux then was Montgomery's young protégé.

After his sacking, Larmoyeux tried to hold Montgomery to their 1998 tobacco fee deal.

But this month, a Miami arbitration panel ruled Larmoyeux was entitled to the money only as long as he was a member of the firm.

The panel awarded him \$250,000 — 25 percent of a \$1 million tobacco payment made to the firm in January 2001, as he was preparing to leave. He previously had received his cut, \$5 million, as the money hit the firm.

Larmoyeux is trying to be philosophical about the money he'll never see — and the millions he could be forced to pay.

"It's only a squabble over money," he said.

Meanwhile, Larmoyeux has his Palm Beach mansion and its 1.2-acre lot on the market for \$10 million.

He paid \$5.9 million for the 12,000-square-foot house and property at El Brillo and Travers ways less than three years ago.

Larmoyeux said he doesn't need the money and isn't planning to move away.

"I bought it as an investment," Larmoyeux said. "This is the third Palm Beach house I've owned. Every house I've sold I've made a lot of money."