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6 THE HONORABLE DIANA L. KIESEL
7 Department 7
8 Noted for Hearing: February 13, 2026, 9:00 a.m.
9 *With Oral Argument*

10 IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON
11 COUNTY OF PIERCE

12 BRIAN BRUTON, CHRISTOPHER HORNE,
13 and TRAVIS THORPE, individually and on
14 behalf of others similarly situated,

15 Plaintiffs,

16 v.

17 LINDE GAS & EQUIPMENT, INC., a
18 Delaware corporation and EARNEST
19 CORNWELL, individually and on behalf of the
20 martial community of EARNEST CORNWELL
21 and J. DOE CORNWELL,

22 Defendants.

CASE NO. 24-2-08098-3

**DECLARATION OF SPENCER
NATHAN THAL IN SUPPORT OF
PLAINTIFFS' UNOPPOSED MOTION
FOR FINAL APPROVAL OF CLASS
ACTION SETTLEMENT AND
ATTORNEYS' FEES AND COSTS**

23 I, Spencer Nathan Thal, declare as follows:

24 1. I am the sole owner of Vanguard Law. I am admitted to practice before this Court
25 and am a member in good standing of the bar of the state of Washington and have been since my
26 admission in 1990. I respectfully submit this declaration in support of Plaintiffs' Unopposed
Motion for Final Approval of Class Action Settlement and Attorneys' Fees and Costs. I have
personal knowledge of the facts and am competent to testify before a court of law.

1 2. I have been actively practicing in labor and employment law for the entire duration
2 of my 35 years, most of it representing unions and workers. I spent the majority of that time
3 working as an in-house attorney for various labor unions. Unions are by their very nature
4 collective organizations of workers. In my role as an in-house attorney, I had countless
5 opportunities to assess the best interest of the class of workers of the bargaining unit through
6 grievances, contract negotiation, and litigation.

7 3. I formed Vanguard Law almost ten years ago. A significant portion of Vanguard
8 Law's caseload is employment litigation, both discrimination and wage and hour litigation. We
9 also are involved with personal injury litigation.

10 4. I have been involved in one other class action: *Weza v. Fastenal Company*, Pierce
11 County Superior Court Case No. 13-2-07444-9.

12 5. Zachariah ("Zach") Thal is an attorney and my son. He worked for Vanguard Law
13 first in 2018 as a Rule 9 intern, and then as an associate attorney on May 1, 2019. He passed the
14 bar later that year. He has been an employee of Vanguard Law continuously since that time
15 working on all aspects of Vanguard Law's litigation practice.

16 6. Zach and I were both involved in the litigation from its inception. We interviewed
17 Plaintiffs, investigated the underlying facts, and researched the potential legal claims before
18 drafting and filing the initial complaint to toll the statute of limitations. Once the complaint was
19 on file and the maximum damages for Plaintiffs and proposed class members were preserved, we
20 actively sought out co-counsel with class action experience to join the case. After Terrell Marshall
21 Law Group agreed to join, the two firms worked together to further investigate the classwide
22 claims and draft an amended complaint that joined Defendant Earnest Cornwell.

23 7. Zach and I contributed to case strategy throughout the litigation, engaged in pre-
24 mediation discussions, and assisted with informal discovery. We also participated in the full-day
25 mediation and following negotiations that led to the settlement agreement. Based on our
26 participation and evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the case, we believe the settlement

1 is fair, reasonable, adequate, and in the best interests of the Settlement Class and that it
2 demonstrates a strong result under the circumstances.

3 8. Vanguard Law has incurred costs of \$241.50 for court filing fees. Such costs were
4 reasonable and necessary to this litigation and the type of cost that would normally be charged to
5 a paying client.

6 9. To date, Vanguard Law has invested more than 59.52 hours into the investigation
7 and litigation of this case. Since its inception, Vanguard Law has worked with no guarantee of
8 being compensated for its time and efforts, with payment of its fees being contingent on
9 successfully obtaining relief for Plaintiffs and Settlement Class Members. As a result, there was
10 substantial risk of non-payment, particularly in light of the challenges inherent in this type of case.
11 Therefore, by necessity, work in this case has been done to the exclusion of work in other matters
12 that likely would have generated fees.

13 10. Vanguard Law's rates are based on reasonable hourly rates, set for attorneys and
14 staff members based on a variety of factors including, among others: the experience and skill
15 required for these types of legal services; the complexity and sophistication required to perform
16 these services; the customary local market rate of such legal services; and the experience,
17 reputation, and ability of the attorneys and staff members.

18 11. In addition to Zach and myself, our paralegal Sophia Stephens also worked on this
19 case. The work performed by Sophia was work that Zach or I would have had to perform absent
20 such assistance. Sophia is qualified to perform substantial legal work in her practice as a paralegal
21 based on her education, training, and experience.

22 12. Attorney Spencer Nathan Thal. Principal. J.D. from Columbia Law School 1990.
23 Rate: \$375. Hours: 37.15. Total fees: \$13,931.25. Work performed: Investigated and analyzed
24 factual background; researched and analyzed legal issues and claims; drafted and filed the initial
25 complaint to stop the statute of limitations; secured experienced class counsel; worked on draft
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1 amended complaint adding claims and defendants; participated in mediation; and worked on
2 motions for preliminary and final approval.

3 13. Attorney Zachariah Thal. Associate. J.D. from University of Washington School
4 of Law 2019. Rate: \$250. Hours 13.60. Total fees: \$3,400.00. Work performed: Consultation
5 and strategizing with co-counsel, legal research, document review, and preparation and
6 participation in the full-day mediation.

7 14. Paralegal Sophia Stephens. 5 years of experience as a paralegal. Rate: \$125.
8 Hours: 8.77. Total fees: \$1,096.25. Work performed: Document review and organization,
9 communications with attorney.

10 15. The total fees requested by Vanguard Law are \$18,427.50.

11 16. Vanguard Law will spend additional hours finalizing the resolution of this case. I
12 anticipate the firm will incur additional fees in relation to the approval and settlement
13 administration process.

14 I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of Washington that the
15 foregoing is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

16 Dated this 4th day of December, 2025.

17 Signed at: Poulsbo, Washington.

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22 SPENCER NATHAN THAL
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