

May 22, 2025

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Board of County Commissioners

Hernando County Government Center
20 N. Main Street
Brooksville, FL 34601

RE: Request for Reduction or Waiver of Restitution Claim – Estate of William J. Sly

Dear Honorable Commissioners,

As the daughter of William Joseph Sly and the personal representative of his estate, I respectfully submit this appeal on behalf of myself and my three sisters.

It is with great difficulty that I write to you today. My father, William J. Sly, was convicted of a serious and repugnant crime in Hernando County. While I have very limited knowledge of those events and I do not know the victim(s), I want to acknowledge the harm caused by my father and express my sympathy for those affected. Nothing in this letter is intended to minimize that impact of my father's crime. I cannot express how deeply ashamed I am that this crime is part of my father's legacy.

My father's legacy also included four daughters, and the reality is that we were all estranged from him for most of our lives. My older half-sisters, Alice and Priscilla, were born of his first marriage. I have only recently connected with them for the first time via phone and social media, and I learned that they, too, had no real relationship with our father. My younger sister Charlotte and I were born from his second marriage, which ended by the time I was 3 years old. While he occasionally visited us as children, our relationship was strained and unusual. By adulthood, all contact had ceased.

Our estrangement was largely due to our father's severe mental illness. He suffered from paranoid schizophrenia, which made it impossible to maintain any healthy or consistent relationship with him. Unfortunately, this condition appears to run in our family, as my sister Charlotte was diagnosed with schizophrenia in her early twenties. Through my relationship with her, I have seen firsthand what a cruel, miserable, and

lonely disease it is for those who suffer it. Schizophrenic disorders are devastating to the person afflicted and their families.

William J. Sly passed away in October 2024. He died unmarried, with no surviving parents. As his next of kin, the responsibility of managing his estate has fallen to me. It has been an incredibly challenging task—emotionally and logistically—as I was unfamiliar with many aspects of his life, his possessions, or even his end-of-life wishes. With help from a couple of his sisters, I've been doing my best to close his affairs with respect, care, and diligence.

I have learned that our father did not own any real estate, and his only source of income was Social Security. The total value of his assets currently in probate is \$46,409, consisting mostly of cash from his bank accounts and the proceeds from the sale of two vehicles that he owned. After attorney's fees and administrative costs of \$9,065 are deducted, the remaining balance will be a modest \$37,344 which will be used to pay creditors, and any remaining balance shall be divided among his four daughters.

During probate, I was made aware of an outstanding civil restitution order stemming from our father's 2010 conviction. The original amount was \$12,000, but with accrued interest, the Hernando County Attorney's Office has submitted a Statement of Claim for more than \$22,395. This was a shocking and disappointing claim, as this sum will significantly reduce the already modest distribution to his heirs—by more than half.

I fully understand and appreciate the purpose of restitution: to punish the offender and to help restore what was lost. But in this case, our father is no longer alive. Enforcing the full amount of this debt will not punish him, it will only force his daughters to pay his debt to society on his behalf. In a broader sense, the effects of our father's actions and his illness have already cost us dearly. If you are willing to reduce or waive this claim, it will not restore our broken relationship with our father but it would ease the closing of this very heavy chapter, and allow my sisters and me to move forward without inheriting yet another consequence of his life.

I ask that you take these circumstances into account when evaluating this claim, and I respectfully ask the Board of County Commissioners to consider a reduction or full waiver of this debt. Thank you for your time and your willingness to consider my appeal.

Respectfully,

Kimberly Barker



Personal Representative of the Estate of William J. Sly