

Termite case settled for \$2M

A lawyer specializing in termite cases said Orkin let a residential complex go to waste.

BY COLLEEN JENKINS
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TAMPA — The Bug Lawyer beat the Orkin Man.

Lawyer Pete Cardillo secured a \$2-million settlement from Orkin this week, five years after accusing the pest control company of allowing the Park Place apartments in Tampa to become infested by termites.

Cardillo, whose practice focuses exclusively on termite cases, said in the lawsuit that a salesman forged reports for years to cover the fact that he wasn't performing annual inspections on the property at 3132 W Lambright Ave.

"They didn't do proper treatment," he said Friday. The complex "was devoured by termites."

Orkin did not admit wrongdoing as part of the settlement, court records show. The company did not respond to a request Friday for comment.

According to the lawsuit, current and former Orkin employees testified in Florida courts that they falsified thousands of termite inspections and forged customer names on the documents. They said they were instructed to do so by managers, the suit states.

Cardillo accused the company of criminal racketeering and fraud, saying it was negligent

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toward Park Place from the start.

Orkin signed the apartment complex on as a client with certain lifetime guarantees in the early 1980s but did not perform a full initial termite treatment, the lawsuit said. Subsequently, the company performed spot treatments. The treatments weren't effective, the suit said; the termites just moved to another part of a building to feed.

Because they were paid for new sales but not inspections, sales staffers had little incentive to per-

form annual inspections on Park Place's 10 apartment buildings and clubhouse, Cardillo said.

"If you're not performing the inspections, you're not seeing the signs of infestation," the attorney said.

Cardillo has won "significant settlements" from Orkin in the past, he said, but the amounts were confidential.

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