



## MPA Law helps Maradona's ex-wife win fraud battle

Lily Squires  
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MPA Law in Miami has helped Claudia Villafañe close a case brought against her by her former husband – Argentine football legend Diego Maradona – who accused her of misappropriating millions of dollars' worth of funds to buy properties in South Florida.

Judge Carlos Lopez disposed the case in the eleventh judicial circuit court in and for Miami-Dade County in Florida on 20 October.

The Miami judge ruled that Maradona's estate has less than 30 days to appeal the ruling.

Maradona filed the lawsuit against his ex-wife in 2015, claiming that she improperly used millions of dollars of his own money to buy six condos in South Florida. The Argentine footballer alleged Villafañe purchased the properties in 2000. Maradona and Villafañe were married between 1989 and 2003. The couple entered into a marital settlement agreement in 2013.

In the original lawsuit, Maradona said that he discovered the purported theft through an audit of his finances in 2015. However, during the recent litigation, Judge Lopez found that the 2015 audit never existed and sanctioned the estate of Maradona for misrepresenting its existence in the complaint and in discovery.

In addition to the allegations of stealing money to pay for the Miami properties, Maradona's case included counts of unjust enrichment, breach of fiduciary duty, conversion, constructive fraud, constructive trust and equitable accounting.

In 2018, Florida's Third District Court of Appeal ruled that the case could be pursued in the US. The court found that Maradona's claims could not be explored in Argentina because a statute of limitations on them had expired there. However, Maradona was able to pursue the lawsuit in the US.

The order from Judge Lopez stated that there was a lack of evidence to corroborate that Villafañe had committed theft.

Paula Aguila – founding partner of MPA Law – first started to represent Villafañe in 2018, when she was previously a partner at her previous firm, Rivero Mestre LLP. Aguila continued to represent Villafañe after launching MPA Law in 2021.

"The summary judgment order is not only the end of the case, but it clears Villafañe's name of these false allegations," comments Aguila.

Maradona is widely considered to be one of the greatest football players of all time. He earned 91 caps and scored 34 goals in his international career with Argentina. He played in four World Cups, including helping Argentina to victory in 1986. He passed away on 2 November 2020.

### **Counsel to Claudia Villafañe**

MPA Law

Partner Paula Aguila and attorney Monica Amador in Miami

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