

Kalaniana'ole Vs. Smithies

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Court : US Supreme Court

Decided On : Jan-06-1913

Appeal No. : 226 U.S. 462

Appellant : Kalaniana'ole

Respondent : Smithies

Judgement :

Kalaniana'ole v. Smithies - 226 U.S. 462 (1913)

U.S. Supreme Court Kalaniana'ole v. Smithies, 226 U.S. 462 (1913)

Kalaniana'ole v. Smithies

No. 109

Argued December 20, 1912

Decided January 6, 1913

226 U.S. 462

ERROR TO THE SUPREME COURT

OF THE TERRITORY OF HAWAII

SYLLABUS

On a pure matter of form as to the parties in a suit coming here from a court of a territory, and where the whole interest in a judgment sued upon was before that court, this Court should not go behind the local practice.

A joint judgment ceases to be joint by the death of one of the parties. Where the joinder of an executor of a party whose interest has ceased is simply a mistake, it is not reversible error.

20 Haw. 138 affirmed.

The facts are stated in the opinion.

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Memorandum opinion by direction of the Court. By MR. JUSTICE HOLMES:

This is a suit on a deficiency judgment rendered upon foreclosure of the mortgage that was under consideration in *Kawananakoa v. Polyblank*, [205 U. S. 349](#) . The judgment was in favor of Polyblank, trustee, and Cockett, sole beneficiary, against Kawananakoa and the plaintiff in error Kalaniana'ole. Before the present suit was begun, the trustee resigned, Smithies was duly appointed successor in the trust, and the former trustee assigned the judgment to him. Smithies and his beneficiary then brought this action against the plaintiff in error and the executor of Kawananakoa, who had died. The executor demurred and had judgment. The plaintiff in error then answered, setting up the discharge of the executor and that the plaintiffs allowed the claim against the latter to be barred by time before bringing suit. The case was heard upon mutual admission of the facts set up in the declaration and answer. In argument, the plaintiff in error also objects that only the original judgment creditors could sue. Both objections were sufficiently answered in the court below. That, as to the plaintiffs, is pure matter of form, on which we should not go behind the local practice. The whole interest in the judgment was before the court. As to the second, the judgment was sued upon as a joint

judgment, but it ceased to be joint by the death of one of the parties bound, as is the nature of joint obligations. *Edsar v. Smart*, T. Raym. 26; Y.B. 3 Ed. 3, 11, pl. 37. See *Towers v. Moor*, 2 Vern. 99. The joinder of the executor was simply a mistake that did no harm. See *Bierce v. Hutchins*, [205 U. S. 340](#) , [205 U. S. 347](#) .

Judgment affirmed.

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