



# Frank McHugh

Fact Sheet 1-2009

Frank McHugh, one of the largest private land owners in the City of Los Angeles, has been in the real estate business since 1968. Through the McHugh Family Trust, Christine O'Donovan Trust (deceased sister) and Circular Holdings LLC, Frank McHugh controls over 200 properties totaling over 1200 units. Counting the properties McHugh controls as the trustee and as the lender, the tenant population in "McHughville" exceeds 6,000, and is possibly as high as 8,000. His properties are concentrated in the Pico-Union and South LA neighborhoods. He also owns buildings in surrounding cities like Huntington Beach, Malibu, Lancaster, Carson, and Pasadena. McHugh also owns over 25 vacant lots in the Antelope Valley.

In the last two years, SAJE organizers visited over 70 McHugh's buildings and have found that McHugh tenants live in buildings with:

- Leaky plumbing
- Faulty and dangerous electrical systems
- Non-working elevators
- Lack of heating
- Roach and vermin infestation
- Numerous fire safety violations
- Broken windows and missing screens
- Non-operational smoke alarms
- Peeling paint that may contain lead
- Holes in walls and uneven floors

While Frank McHugh may be anonymous to the general public, he is ubiquitous in the Los Angeles housing scene. Tenant organizers, LAHD officers and inspectors, City Attorney staff, County Public Health staff, LAFD inspectors, non-profit legal firms, community clinics, and grass roots community organizations are all familiar with Frank McHugh. His relationship to his tenants and organizations include:

- At least 40 civil lawsuits filed by his tenants - each time McHugh settling before a judgment
- At least 550 evictions between the years 1991-2000
- Thousands of housing, health and fire citations, sometimes over 100 violations in a single building inspection
- 3 City Attorney criminal complaints against McHugh – once in 2003, which was dismissed, once in 2004, which was settled, and once in 2007.

The last criminal complaint, filed on two properties next to the Staples Center as a result of numerous fire and health violations, was recently settled in December 2008. The LA Superior court sentenced McHugh to probation for 5 years, pay over \$14,000 in fines and costs, make \$60,000 in charitable contributions, and ordered him to divest himself from all rental property interests in Los Angeles within 3 years. (Case #'s 7HY05771 and 7HY05781)

McHugh tenants went public with their campaign on June 26, 2008. They are working with SAJE and want repairs, respect and reparations. Earlier in the year, McHugh tenants tried to negotiate with McHugh to make needed repairs, but he refused to recognize any tenant organization. Tenants are working with Inner City Law Center on habitability lawsuits and recently filed for 275 Witmer Street, 90026, and plan on filing additional suits at other McHugh buildings.