

## Ex-Bank of Anderson leader wins arbitration

### *Anderson Independent*

Arbitrators ruled Thursday in favor of former Bank of Anderson President and Chief Executive Officer David King, saying that the terms of his employment agreement were breached with his firing in January 2006.

A three-member panel of the American Arbitration Association awarded Mr. King an amount equal to what he was due under the terms of his employment agreement plus interest and his legal expenses. Mr. King sought arbitration after the Bank of Anderson holding company, Peoples Bancorporation Inc., relieved him and the bank's founding board of directors from their duties.

"While this (arbitration) resulted in moral and financial victory, the overall experience has been painful and difficult," said Mr. King, who is co-owner of Sullivan-King Mortuary in Anderson and now works as a real estate broker. "I no longer serve this community as the president of the bank that I was instrumental in founding. I miss the daily working relationship that I shared with the employees, directors and customers of the Bank of Anderson. Over the past year, my reputation and that of the founding board has been questioned as this community has attempted to understand the events surrounding our termination."

**Richard Robbins**, Mr. King's attorney in the case, said bank officials would need to be the first to release the exact award amount because the sum has a material effect on bank earnings.

"David is such a terrific person," Mr. Robbins said. "Unfortunately this (arbitration ruling) doesn't help the bank, but at least it clears David's name."

The award amount is significant and the decision also vindicates the board members fired with Mr. King, he and Mr. Robbins said.

Peoples Bancorporation officials have never discussed the reason for the firings and could not immediately be reached for comment Thursday.

In a joint statement released in February 2006, board members who were terminated said their vision of a community bank conflicted with the changing holding company's objective to gain more centralized control.

The six-page ruling by the arbitration panel indicates that Bank of Anderson and Peoples Bancorporation breached the covenant of good faith and fair dealing and characterized the firings as "less than honorable," Mr. Robbins said.

Some bank shareholders are upset about Peoples Bancorporation actions and are considering taking legal action against the organization, Mr. Robbins said.

"I don't believe this is over," he said.