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Greenwood Co. wrongful death case settles for \$875K

By: renee.sexton Renee Sexton January 14, 2020

The family of a 75-year-old woman who died as a result of “horrific” facial and chest injuries suffered in a crash with a logging truck has reached an \$875,000 settlement in a wrongful death and survival action, the family’s attorneys report.

Eric Bland and Ronald Richter of Bland Richter in Columbia and Matt Bodman in Columbia report that Judith Stover was driving to work in April 2019 when she collided with a logging truck on Highway 221 in Greenwood as the truck was attempting to turn left. Stover’s vehicle smashed into the trailer portion of the truck and died at the scene about 10 minutes later, Bland said.

Investigators with the South Carolina Highway Patrol Multi-Disciplinary Accident Investigation Team determined that neither Stover nor the truck’s driver were at fault in the crash.

The truck belonged to Wood Haulers, LLC, a small, independent trucking company, and Bland said the family asked for “a little under \$1 million” based on the \$1 million limit of the company’s insurance policy. Given the conservative reputation of Greenwood County juries, the family decided it would be their best interest to settle and put the case behind them rather than to take it to a jury, Bland said.



Bland



Richter

The settlement, reached on Dec. 18, occurred outside the confines of mediation after the suit was filed, but before the case was placed on a trial roster.

“For the family, it’s an excellent result, we think, given the locale, and the amount of insurance coverage,” Bland said. “When you can basically get 88 percent of it without the risk of a trial or a protracted litigation, I think it’s a good result.”

Ron Diegel of Murphy & Grantland in Columbia, who represented Wood Haulers, said they were glad the case could be resolved without any admission of fault “that allows the parties to achieve early closure and avoid protracted litigation arising out of a very tragic accident.”

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SETTLEMENT REPORT — WRONGFUL DEATH

Amount: \$875,000

Injuries alleged: Death

Case name: *Judith F. Stover, Deceased, by and through her personal representative, Scott B. Lewis v. Wood Haulers, LLC and William Alexander Bright*

Court: Greenwood County Circuit Court

Case No.: 2019-CP-24-00725

Date of settlement: Dec. 18, 2019

Insurance carrier: Progressive Northern Insurance Company

Attorneys for plaintiff: Eric Bland and Ronald Richter of Bland Richter in Columbia and Matt Bodman in Columbia

Attorneys for defendants: Ron Diegel of Murphy & Grantland in Columbia for Wood Haulers, LLC and David Moore of Turner Padgett in Greenville for William Alexander Bright

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