

The JLF Report

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JLF Wins Case Against Auto Giant GM

Prior to trial, Joye Law Firm successfully reached on behalf of clients William B. Stockton, Sr., and his wife, a large settlement of a case against General Motors Corporation. In July of 2002, Mr. Stockton, a 57 year-old recently retired police officer and father of three children, was returning home with dinner to his wife of 38 years. Mr. Stockton was doing everything right. He was driving within the posted speed limit. He was maintaining a proper lookout. He was properly belted.

As he was proceeding through an intersection, a vehicle coming from the opposite direction was rear-ended and forced into Mr. Stockton's lane of travel. Despite Mr. Stockton's efforts to avoid the accident, the vehicle struck Mr. Stockton's 1994 GMC Yukon, sending it into an off-road roll-over. The roof of the vehicle collapsed well below the steering wheel and crushed down on Mr. Stockton severely encroaching his occupant safety area, causing his spinal cord to sever. He also suffered a brain injury.

As a result of the violent accident, Mr. Stockton was rendered a quadriplegic and he and his wife's lives were forever changed. Mr. Stockton's medical bills were astronomical and climbed to nearly \$1,500,000.00. His anticipated future medical care costs were even more exorbitant and expected to reach into the millions. The at-fault driver's insurance coverage was so minimal, it afforded the Stocktons with virtually no assistance.

The Stocktons' lives were shattered. Instead of celebrating their retirement and engaging in their active lifestyles of dancing and traveling, the Stocktons were forced to sell their dream home and relocate to a more affordable city located hours from their children and grandchildren - their only support. The Stocktons were relegated to spending most of their days in their home due to Mr. Stockton's limited mobility and his need for 24 hour care. Due to their inability to afford in-home nursing care, this care fell squarely on the shoulders of Mrs. Stockton. While Mrs. Stockton dutifully and lovingly provided this care, it was not without significant health costs to her, resulting in back surgery and necessitating heart surgery that had to be postponed because of their inability to afford assistance in the care of Mr. Stockton.

A few months after the accident, the Stocktons, who reside in Virginia, turned to Joye Law Firm for assistance. The firm's experience in handling these types of cases has allowed it to build a nationwide automotive products liability practice. Joye Law Firm shortly thereafter filed an action on behalf of the Stocktons against General Motors Corporation in the State of Virginia alleging that General Motors Corporation had defectively designed the roof of the 1994 GMC Yukon by failing to sufficiently reinforce its roof so

as to afford passengers like Mr. Stockton with any reasonable degree of protection. The lawsuit alleged that General Motors Corporation was aware of the dangers associated with roof crush and knowingly neglected to afford its consumers with protection from a known danger. While vehicle roll-overs do not account for a large number of accidents, they do account for a very large percentage of overall fatalities.

Joye Law Firm vigorously pursued this case. Joye Law Firm retained numerous nationally known experts from across the country to assist in the preparation of this case for trial. These experts included an accident reconstructionist who visited the accident scene in Virginia in order to recreate the accident sequence, a biomechanic to discern how the life-altering injury occurred, an automotive design engineer who examined the 1994 GMC Yukon for defects and then developed an alternative design to the existing roof which would have afforded Mr. Stockton with appropriate protection, a life care planner to develop a health care protocol for



Mr. Stockton, and an economist to establish Mr. Stockton's future medical care costs. Mr. Stockton's physicians and additional medical experts were also prepared to testify in the trial of the case.

Joye Law Firm uncompromisingly and relentlessly pursued this case in Virginia on behalf of the Stocktons. There were numerous heated court battles in Virginia over General Motors Corporation's failure to produce documents that were necessary for Joye Law Firm's preparation of the case for trial. Depositions also took place in Virginia. Due to Joye Law Firm's aggressive prosecution of this case to exhaustively prepare for trial, the case was able to be effectively resolved through mediation just months before the two-week trial of the case was scheduled to go forward.

(Continued - See JLF v. GM on p.2)

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Joye Law Firm Awards \$2,500 Scholarships To Four Local High School Students

As part of its Community Relations Program, the Joye Law Firm was pleased to be able to present four local high school graduates with a \$2,500.00 scholarship to be used towards furthering their education. The law firm presented the scholarships to the four winners at a dinner on June 8, with each of the winners having family members in attendance.

Pictured from left to right above are: Alishia Jenkins (Goose Creek High School); Reese Joye; Randy Barrineau (Hanahan High School); Megan Clark (North Charleston High School); Shea Sellers (Summerville High School); Ken Harrell; and Angus Lawton.

In addition to being merit-based, each of the winners wrote an essay that addressed ways to curb the problem of teen-age drinking and driving.

All four of the winners will be attending South Carolina universities in the fall. Ms. Jenkins and Mr. Barrineau will be attending the University of South Carolina. Ms. Clark will attend Charleston Southern University and Ms. Sellers will attend Clemson University.

"This is a great way for us to give back to the communities that have been so good to us for the past 35 years," said

Reese Joye, the firm's founding member. "If anything, we hope to expand this program in the future."

Ken Harrell, the firm's partner who oversees the law firm's Community Relations Program, agreed, stating: "Each of our winners were really good kids and it makes you feel



good about the future of our community knowing that they will all be staying in-state to attend college. Who knows? There may be a future Joye Law Firm attorney in the group."

JLF vs. GM (continued from page 1)

The Stocktons expressed appreciation to firm attorneys Mark C. Joye, and Amy B. Rothschild and their staff, for their personal attentiveness and tenacious efforts in the case. Mark stated, "For years, the dangers of roof crush associated with roll-overs has been known to the automobile industry. Despite notice of this obvious hazard, especially as relates to sport utility vehicles, the automobile industry continues to ignore it even though roof strength could be improved at minimal cost. We are glad that we were able to assist the Stocktons in achieving an adequate settlement so that they can provide for themselves for the rest of their lives by holding General Motors Corporation accountable for its actions."

In addition to automotive product liability cases that have been litigated in California, Michigan and Virginia, Joye Law Firm and its product liability team, comprised of four attorneys and a support staff, also have ongoing product liability cases in Florida, North Carolina, and of course, South Carolina. Joye Law Firm's present caseload includes a myriad of vehicle manufacturers and defects. Joye Law Firm is currently working on cases involving Dodge Durangos, Ford Explorers, General Motors Corporation TrailBlazers and Yukons, Plymouth minivans, and Freightliner tractor-trailers. While these cases all involve crashworthiness, other

specific defects at issue include fuel lines, handling and stability control, roll-over and roof crush, occupant restraint systems, door locking and latch systems, and window glazing.



Welcome Back: Attorney Craig Smith Returns To JLF



Attorney J. Craig Smith returns to the Joye Law Firm after three years in Connecticut. While Craig's wife, Erica, attended her medical residency program at Yale University in Connecticut, Craig worked at one of the nation's premiere plaintiff firms located in Bridgeport, Connecticut. During that time, he honed his trial skills handling cases involving product liability, personal injury, sports law, trucking, anti-trust, appeals and premises liability in addition to conducting continuing legal education seminars and writing nationally published legal articles. He now rejoins the Joye Law Firm's litigation team where he will handle trials in the same areas. Craig is licensed to practice law in South Carolina, Connecticut and Georgia. Prior to becoming a lawyer, Craig had a successful career as an actor, appearing in numerous roles on stage and in television and film. Craig met his wife when they played the title roles in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet at the Dock Street Theatre in Charleston. In his spare time, Craig enjoys writing, exercising and traveling.

New Faces At Joye Law Firm

Patricia Jourdan joined the Joye Law Firm's criminal defense team in March of this year. Prior to joining Joye Law Firm, Patricia worked for the Charleston County Magistrate Court system for 12 years. She obtained an Associate's Degree in Criminal Justice in May of 2004. She enjoys spending time with her family and going to the beach. She has two sweet children, Chelsea and Harley. She recently celebrated her first wedding anniversary with her wonderful husband, Eric.

Jaime Owens is a native of Johns Island, SC. After relocating to Havelock, North Carolina in 1995, she graduated from Havelock High School in 2000. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and is currently pursuing a Master of Arts in Liberal Studies from the University of North Carolina- Wilmington. She has been employed with the Joye Law Firm since March and is currently our Mass Torts Coordinator. In her spare time, she loves to exercise, shop, dance, read and enjoys spending time with her mother, brother and the rest of her family.

Cissie Coble is married to an FBI Agent and has therefore had the opportunity to live in several states. She has been happily married for the past 33 years and has two sons, a daughter, one grandson and two granddaughters, all who live in Pennsylvania. Cissie's Faith is paramount in her life, and she is very involved in her church. She enjoys traveling, baking, reading, and is seriously addicted to crossword puzzles and different versions of sudoku.

Isabell Holmes is a native of Miami, Florida. She graduated from North Charleston High School and has lived in Charleston for 11 years. She attended Trident Technical College and completed the Law-Related Studies program, which is approved by the American Bar Association. She earned associates degrees in Paralegal and Public Service. Isabell began at Motley Rice, L.L.C., where she processed mass claims for victims of occupational diseases. She later became a Litigation Paralegal for another law firm where she worked in areas of Civil Litigation, Criminal Law, Family Law, Corporate Law and Real Estate Law.

Isabell is married and has a nine year-old daughter, Essence. She enjoys shopping, travel, bike riding, exercising, and spending quality time with her family.



Client Referrals Are Our Key To Success

With the amount of legal advertising increasing, we are well aware that the key to our law firm's success is referrals of family members and friends by our current clients. We have actively marketed our services in a number of ways but please understand that we are greatly appreciative of any referrals you can send to us. We have found that our best cases tend to be those cases that are referred by previous and current clients. If someone you know has a legal problem, we welcome your referral. If it is not a legal matter that our law firm handles, we will do our best to refer them to an appropriate attorney. Thank you to all of our clients who have kindly referred clients to us in the past.

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JOYE LAW FIRM FILES NATIONAL CLASS ACTION LAWSUIT AGAINST CREDIT CARD COMPANIES

Joye Law Firm attorneys Craig Smith and Angus Lawton have filed suit as part of a national class action against major credit card firms. The lawsuit, on behalf of a local merchant and other merchants nationwide, alleges antitrust violations against Visa, Mastercard and about 40 major banks. The allegations relate to "interchange" rates paid by merchants every time a customer makes a Visa or Mastercard purchase and the suit alleges that the defendants have conspired to fix the prices of the rates. A related case is currently pending in a New York Federal Court and the local case will likely be merged with that one. Smith and Lawton will be working with other law firms from around the country to prosecute the claims. Joye Law Firm has been in existence for more than 30 years. The nationally known law firm has achieved record verdicts for people who

suffer serious personal injuries or economic harm from dangerous products, negligence, drunk drivers, corporate or governmental abuse and commercial misconduct.



JLF HANDLES SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY CASES

The Joye Law Firm now has a thriving Social Security disability practice. Attorney Matt Jackson and paralegal Lori Mitchum are now representing hundreds of lowcountry residents who are seeking to recover Social Security disability benefits.

If you have questions about how to apply for Social Security disability, please call Mr. Jackson at 725-7141 or call Ms. Mitchum at 725-7149. You do not need an attorney to file an application for Social Security disability benefits. However, if you receive a denial letter from the Social Security Administration (most applicants are initially denied), we would urge you to contact Mr. Jackson and Ms. Mitchum to see if the Joye Law Firm, L.L.P. can assist you with filing an appeal of this denial. The consultation regarding our firm's assisting you with a Social Security disability claim is free and there is no fee unless we are able to assist you in obtaining appropriate disability benefits.

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