

Man's Death in Airline Crash Is Huge Loss for Family, Charities and Community



On August 27, 2006, Delta Comair Flight #5191 crashed during takeoff from Blue Grass Airport in Lexington, Kentucky. The pilot, another crew member, and all 47 passengers were killed. Only the co-pilot survived. The investigation conducted by the National Transportation Safety Board clearly determined that the cause of the accident was pilot error. In the early morning hours the crew had mistakenly turned onto the wrong runway, one that was too short to accommodate the Bombardier CRJ-100 aircraft. Unable to gain sufficient speed and altitude to clear the end of the runway, the plane crashed at the end of the runway and burst into flames.

When dramatic, violent tragedies like this occur, the public seldom gets a chance to learn the more intimate, personal details of the people victimized by the incident. Public attention moves on rapidly past the total number of people killed and injured, the circumstances and cause of the accident, and the promises to take steps to avoid another such tragedy. Each individual victim in this terrible acci-

The investigation conducted by the National Transportation Safety Board clearly determined that the cause of the accident was pilot error.

In the early morning hours the crew had mistakenly turned onto the wrong runway, one that was too short to accommodate the Bombardier CRJ-100 aircraft. Unable to gain sufficient speed and altitude to clear the end of the runway, the plane crashed at the end of the runway and burst into flames.

dent represented a painful loss to ever-widening circles of people that they touched, or would have touched, in their lives – family, friends, work associates, and fellow church and civic group members. In pursuing any wrongful death action against those whose errors, mistakes, or negligence cause such incidents, it is important to describe the value of each life lost and the impact each loss has on those left behind. John Doe, one of the passengers who died on this flight, is a clear example of the loss that continues to be experienced far beyond family and close friends.

At the time of his death, Mr. Doe served as the senior vice president and chief operating officer for a prominent charitable foundation in Florida. He had attended a foundation board meeting in another state and was heading home to Florida. In his work at the foundation, Mr. Doe oversaw substance abuse and mental illness treatment programs located in several states. He was a recognized leader in his field for his abilities, achievements, and dedication. He had devoted his life to serving his community and achieved a level of success that very few people reach.

Mr. Doe was a healthy, active gentleman in his mid-60's, fully intent on continuing his work and community support. His work at the foundation was not merely employment, but an integral part of his personal and spiritual mission to help others. As with the loss felt by the many other survivors of the victims of this crash, John Doe's abrupt and horrific death was a devastating loss for his own children, and a substantial loss to his local community and the larger community that he touched with his dedication and support, well beyond the United States.

John Doe's estate asked SDSBS attorneys **Chris Searcy** and **Bill Norton** to represent them in a wrongful death suit. The issue of liability was clear, and mediation focused on damages resulting from the tragic loss of this gentleman. Eventually, the parties reached a confidential settlement. ■

On August 27, 2006, Delta Comair Flight #5191 crashed during takeoff from an airport in Lexington, Kentucky. Only one person survived. The sudden, violent death of 49 people within an instant is a tragedy in itself. But each individual within that terrible tragedy is a very personal and painful loss to a wide circle of family, friends, co-workers, and civic and church group members – each of whom was touched in their life by the person they lost.