

## **ATTORNEYS FIGHT FOR PARAPLEGIC MAN**

In January 1998, things were going great for Lynn Eaton. He had just taken his life savings and purchased ten acres of land in Indian River County, Fla. A successful construction supervisor for a local builder, Mr. Eaton planned to build his dream home on the land. During his spare time, he was an avid outdoorsman and enjoyed riding his horse, Raven.

On Jan. 10, 1998, Mr. Eaton's world came to a halt. Mr. Eaton was riding his horse Raven, with a guide, westbound on the north shoulder of County Road 510 in Fellsmere. It was around dusk. Thomas and Cathy Hinkle were driving in their Chevrolet Suburban and pulling a horse trailer when the side view mirror of the Suburban struck Mr. Eaton's horse. Mr. Eaton was slammed to the ground. Mr. Hinkle later testified that he had never seen the horse prior to impact. Eyewitnesses, however, said the horse could be clearly seen from more than 200 feet away.

Mr. Eaton fractured his back in the fall and was rendered a paraplegic. Mr. Eaton, no longer able to work, lost the land on which he was going to build his dream home. A once independent man, Mr. Eaton came to rely on friends and family to help care for him.

In August 1998, attorneys Sean Domnick and Chris Searcy filed a complaint on behalf of Mr. Eaton. Listed in the suit were Mr. and Mrs. Hinkle, as well as Wesley and Tonya Davis, owners of the horse trailer the Hinkles were pulling. On March 23, Mr. Domnick and Mr. Searcy settled Mr. Eaton's case for the policy limits, which were \$3.025 million. Because of the settlement, Mr. Eaton can now afford state-of-the-art equipment for paraplegics and is gaining back his independence. ■