

## Seven-figure settlement in case reached before lawsuit was filed

In 2018, Robert Brown (not his real name) was looking for a good job and a fresh start. He found both in Stuart, Fla. Robert was hired by a contractor who was remodeling homes. He was good at his new job and enjoyed the work. Robert had also turned the corner on his prior substance abuse struggles. Now in his late twenties, he was enjoying ten months of sobriety and still counting. For others living with him at a sober-living facility, Robert was a beacon of hope. He was understandably proud of the direction his life was now heading.

On a clear morning in April 2019, Robert's recent and future accomplishments were tragically taken from him. He was heading to work at a job site near Indiantown, Florida, when he slowed his pickup truck to a stop, waiting for oncoming traffic to clear in order to make a left turn. For reasons that may never be known, a commercial truck driver operating a fuel-delivery truck failed to notice that Robert's vehicle had stopped. The fuel-delivery truck slammed into the back of Robert's pickup truck pushing it forward and into the path of a semi-trailer truck coming from the opposite direction. Robert died at the scene of the accident.

Robert was not married and had no children. His parents, Jean and Ralph Brown, were designated his survivors under Florida's Wrongful Death Act. The Browns, still living in Wisconsin where Robert grew up, contacted the Wisconsin firm of Habush Habush & Rottier, S.C., and asked the firm to investigate the death of their son. Because his death had occurred in Florida, the firm enlisted the help of SDSBS attorneys **Chris Searcy** and **Jack Hill** to prosecute a wrongful death case on behalf of Robert's estate and the parents as his survivors. Mr. Searcy and Mr. Hill immediately retained appropriate experts to inspect the scene of the accident and the vehicles involved in order to gather evidence about the circumstances surrounding Robert's death.

The attorneys presented a demand for policy limits from the fuel-delivery truck driver, his employer, and their insurance carriers. A confidential multiple seven-figure settlement was reached before a lawsuit was filed. While the settlement will never adequately compensate the Browns for their tremendous loss, the speed at which the parties reached settlement and avoided protracted litigation was a comfort to Robert's parents. Thankfully, they have been able to shift their focus from the circumstances of Robert's death to a reflection of his life and the accomplishments that had inspired others. ♦

## Seven-figure settlement in case against VA Medical Center for wrongful death due to negligent medical care

**VA Hospital failed to provide appropriate and timely treatment for Navy veteran.**

SDSBS attorneys **Ed Ricci** and **Elise Sherr Allison** successfully reached a seven-figure settlement with the Miami VA Healthcare System's parent facility, the Bruce W. Carter VA Medical Center in Miami, Florida, for the wrongful death of Bob Bradford, a robust 74-year-old man who passed on February 13, 2017, due to negligent medical care. (The case had been scheduled to begin trial in April 2020.) Mr. Bradford was a U. S. Navy veteran who went on to complete a successful career with the Department of Homeland Security in the field of counter-terrorism.

Mr. Bradford presented to the Carter VA Medical Center on June 29, 2016, with acute gallbladder illness (cholecystitis). The VA Hospital failed to provide appropriate and timely treatment for his condition and the disease deteriorated over the next 32 days. This resulted in a gangrenous gallbladder

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and a pus-filled abdomen necessitating emergency abdominal surgery on July 31, 2016. The delay in treatment led to multiple hospitalizations for protracted acute life-threatening conditions including persistent pain and suffering, profound malnutrition, neuro-muscular debility, multiple infectious bedsores, poly-microbial drug-resistant bacterial processes, global multi-system injuries, and, ultimately, his death.

Mr. Bradford is survived by his wife and two daughters, one of whom, following in her father's footsteps, is on active duty with the U. S. Navy. ♦

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