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\$2.4 million Verdict for Young Man Run Down by City Worker
27-year-old suffered serious injuries in Gold Coast accident

CHICAGO, September 23, 2013 – Late Friday afternoon, a Cook County jury awarded a \$2.4 million verdict to Stephen Dewart, formerly of Chicago. Dewart, who was 27 at the time of the accident, suffered multiple injuries when Chicago Streets and Sanitation worker Dwight Washington's vehicle struck him and three other people at the corner of Rush and Cedar streets on May 21, 2011. Dewart was represented by Susan L. Novosad and Jordan S. Powell of Levin & Perconti. The Honorable Gregory J. Wojkowski presided over the five day trial. The jury deliberated for less than two hours.

On the day of the accident, Dewart was participating in a photo shoot for his wife's company. Washington lost control of the city-owned truck he was operating and plowed into Dewart and the other victims. Washington, then 61, tested over the legal blood alcohol limit and police found an open bottle of brandy in his truck.

"Stephen suffered several spinal fractures, his leg was broken in two places, and he was hospitalized for six days," said Novosad. "Immediately following the accident, he had a rod surgically placed in his lower right leg. He required two additional surgeries and months of physical therapy and rehabilitation following the accident."

The lawsuit was filed in June 2011 and named Washington and the City of Chicago as defendants. The lawsuit alleged that Washington was driving under the influence of alcohol at high speeds and failed to yield to pedestrians or slow his vehicle to prevent a collision. It also claimed vicarious liability, noting that the City was responsible for Washington's actions because he was an employee.

"Prior to trial, Dwight Washington and The City of Chicago admitted that they were 100% at fault for Stephen's injuries," said Novosad. "Although Washington was drunk at time of accident, the judge ruled intoxication was not admissible because the defendants admitted liability and therefore Washington's conduct was not at issue. The jury was asked to determine how Stephen should be compensated for the disabilities he must cope with for the rest of his life.

We were pleased that the jury fully understood the devastating effects of Washington's reckless actions and feel that justice was served."

"I am grateful that a group of ordinary citizens understood the pain that my family and I have gone through these past few years," said Dewart. "At the end of the trial, one of the jurors told me to 'Enjoy the rest of your life.' This was so instructive and indicative of the closure of this very difficult chapter. This compensation will not erase the injuries I experienced and continue to experience, but they will help ensure financial stability for me and my family."

"For over two years Stephen has been fighting to regain the life he had prior to this terrible accident," said Powell. "We hope that this verdict will bring him some peace while helping him to move forward. We also hope that this lawsuit will encourage City officials to create more effective screening processes for City employees to avoid future accidents such as this."

Levin & Perconti is a nationally renowned law firm concentrating in all types of personal injury, medical malpractice, nursing home abuse and neglect, and wrongful death litigation. The lawyers at Levin & Perconti are committed to protecting and vindicating the rights of people who are injured by the negligence of others. Please contact the firm at (312) 332-2872 or visit www.levinperconti.com for more information.

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