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# \$2.4 Million Verdict for Young Man Run Down by City Worker

A 27-year-old suffered serious injuries in the accident, which occurred in the Gold Coast.

Posted by [Dan Lambert](#) (Editor) , September 23, 2013 at 10:46 PM



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A Cook County jury awarded a \$2.4 million verdict Friday afternoon to former Chicago resident Stephen Dewart.

Dewart, who was 27 at the time, 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.

On the day of the accident, Dewart was participating in a photo shoot for his wife's company, officials said in a written statement. 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.

Dewart was represented by Susan L. Novosad and Jordan S. Powell of Levin & Perconti. Judge Gregory J. Wojkowski presided over the five-day trial. The jury deliberated for less than two hours.

“Stephen suffered several spinal fractures, his leg was broken in two places, and he was hospitalized for six days,” Novosad said, according to a release from the law firm. “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 percent at fault for Stephen’s injuries,” Novosad said. “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. ... We were pleased that the jury fully understood the devastating affects of Washington’s reckless actions and feel that justice was served.”

Dewart says he is grateful that the jury understood the pain and all that his family has gone through since the incident.

“At the end of the trial, one of the jurors told me to ‘Enjoy the rest of your life,’” he said, in the firm’s news release. “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.”

Powell said Dewart has spent the two years recovering.

“We hope that this verdict will bring him some peace while helping him to move forward,” Powell said. “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.”

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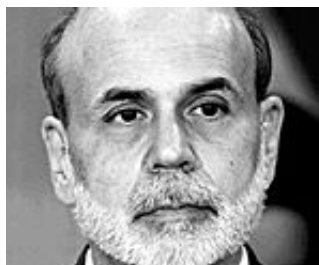
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