



Swope Rodante Wins Plaintiffs' Verdict in Legal Malpractice Lawsuit against GEICO

Date | August 28, 2013

August 26, 2013 (Tampa, FL) — After three hours of deliberations in the Sam Gibbons Federal Courthouse, a Middle District jury returned a verdict finding GEICO guilty of bad faith, based on the conduct of its office of staff counsel – practicing as the Law Offices Of James Pratt, nee' the Law Offices of Ellen Ehrenpreis.

The plaintiff, Nicole Hilson, was 16 years old and had been driving for less than a month when she caused an apparently routine auto accident. The jury determined that GEICO did not have a fair chance to settle the claim before a lawsuit was filed, but also found that GEICO's staff counsel's office failed to do all it should have to protect its client from the 7 figure judgment that was ultimately entered against her.

This is believed to be the first time that an insurance company was found to have directly committed legal malpractice while directly engaged in the practice of law, representing its insured.

The Plaintiffs were represented by the Tampa law firms of Swope, Rodante P.A. Dale Swope, Angela Rodante, Stephanie Miles, and Shea Moxon of Swope, Rodante P.A. appeared for the plaintiff at trial. Defendant GEICO General Insurance Company was represented at trial by an experienced team of trial lawyers led by attorney Richard Young, Adam Duke, and Justin Lusko from the Pensacola based law firm of Young, Bill, Roubos & Boles, P.A., who have enjoyed repeated successes in defending GEICO in excess judgment cases.

The jury's verdict sends a strong message to insurers who decide to directly sell legal services to their insureds through in house lawyers and could usher in an evolutionary adjustment as to how claims arising from excess verdicts will be handled in the future.

Swope, Rodante P.A.

Swope, Rodante P.A. is the direct, continuous descendant of a solo practice Dale Swope first founded in 1979. The firm is a twelve lawyer civil trial practice firm with offices in Tampa, Florida and Atlanta, Georgia. Practice areas include catastrophic personal injuries or wrongful death, insurance coverage disputes, and both first party and third party insurance bad faith actions. The firm's team of experienced and knowledgeable attorneys and staff work with an unyielding commitment to protecting the rights of the injured and underinsured.

For more information, visit www.SwopeRodante.com or call Emily Ghosh, Director of Marketing at (813) 283 8035 or emilyg@swopelaw.com.