

Head-on Collision Causes Brain Injury

Virginia Man Faces Major Medical Setbacks

On Dec. 5, 1998, around 6:30 p.m., Henry "Mac" Hughes was driving northbound in his 1985 Toyota van. He was traveling on Conduit Road in Colonial Heights, Va. Unknown to Mr. Hughes, 16-year-old Jason Paul Mapes was driving a 1992 Toyota van southbound on the same road. Mr. Mapes crossed over two lanes of traffic and struck Mr. Hughes's car head-on. Mr. Hughes was airlifted to the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond, where he underwent surgery for a forearm fracture and the removal of a blood clot in his brain. Unfortunately, he would never fully recover.

Mr. Hughes and his wife, Julie, have three children: Allison (21), Corey (19), and Ashley (17). Mr. Hughes was the owner of H&L Flowers in Colonial Heights. For the past 20 years, Mr. Hughes held the prestigious honor of joining other florists to decorate The White House during the holiday season.

Mr. Hughes sustained lost earnings of \$30,000 per year. Attorneys David White and Chris Speed handled the case in Virginia, where they were able to obtain workers' compensation benefits for Mr. Hughes. They also filed a lawsuit for negligence against Mr. Mapes, USAA, Allstate Insurance Company, Travelers Insurance Company, and GEICO Insurance Company, seeking bodily injury insurance benefits, as well as underinsured motorist benefits.

Mr. Hughes was evaluated by a neuropsychiatrist Dr. Gregory O'Shanick, a rehabilitation expert Sharon Revis, and a vocational assessment expert Peder Melberg. Because of the brain injury, it was determined that Mr. Hughes was permanently and totally disabled, and that he would be unable to return to work. Economist N. Fayne Edwards, Ph.D. prepared an analysis of Mr. Hughes's lost earning capacity and the cost of life care plan.

Mr. White and Mr. Speed prepared for a May 1, 2000 trial, but shortly before, the case was settled for \$1.3 million. Mr. Hughes will use the settlement to care for himself and his family. Sadly, since the settlement, a more serious complication has developed for Mr. Hughes. He was recently diagnosed with Stage III-B Squamous Cell Carcinoma of the lung and is currently being treated with a combination of chemotherapy and radiation. ■

