

Young Woman's Legacy Lives On

On Oct. 9, 1997, the lives of Marjorie and Tom Anliker were forever changed. On that day, the Anlikers lost their 25-year-old daughter, Margaret, in a horrible tractor-trailer accident. Attorneys Chris Searcy and John Shipley would later show that this tragedy should never have happened to this bright and promising young woman.

Margaret was the Director of Orientation at Florida International University in Miami. She was traveling northbound on I-95 to attend a homecoming and college reunion at her alma mater, the University of South Carolina.

Around 9:45 p.m., Margaret had made it as far as Daytona when a van changed lanes, causing a minor fender bender accident with Margaret's car. The two cars, plus a third bystander car, pulled over to the right shoulder of the I-95 overpass. Two firefighters arrived on the scene and checked on the well-being of all the parties.

At the time of the accident, Mr. Weaver's logs reflected that he had been driving for four days without substantial rest.

While traffic on I-95 continued to pass by the accident scene, Michael Weaver, driving a leased truck for Tandy Corporation, was fast approaching at an unsafe speed of 74 miles per hour. He lost control of his 64,000 pound truck, jackknifing it to the right, and directly mowing through Margaret and the four other people who were standing on the shoulder of the road. Rescue workers tried frantically to extricate Margaret from the frame of the truck while she suffered in pain and anguish. Minutes later, Margaret succumbed to her traumatic injuries and died.



Margaret Elizabeth Anliker

Scott Ballard of Ballard & Ballard in Fayetteville, Ga., referred the case to attorneys Mr. Searcy and Mr. Shipley. Through their investigation, Mr. Searcy and Mr. Shipley uncovered numerous shoddy and deplorable operating procedures by Tandy Corporation.

Tandy had increased the allowable average speed for its drivers, while discontinuing log audit procedures on leased drivers such as Mr. Weaver. In addition, Tandy's fleet of trucks was old and had numerous mechanical problems. At the time of the accident, Mr. Weaver's logs reflected that he had been driving for four days without substantial rest. Furthermore, he was operating a truck in which the braking system was out of compliance with federal and state standards. He also had an unauthorized female passenger in the truck at the time of the accident. In April 2000, the case was settled on behalf of the Anlikers for an undisclosed amount.

Since the accident, the Anlikers and their other daughter, Catherine, have struggled to put their lives back together. The University of South Carolina established a scholastic endowment in Margaret's name, and in March 1998 an auditorium was named after Margaret at Florida International University. The Anlikers have found some solace in the fact that Margaret was loved, respected, and admired by hundreds of friends, college classmates, and professors. Margaret's untimely death was a loss for all, and she will be truly missed. ■