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Jury Awards \$4.1 Million in Asbestos Electrical Case; Assesses 5 Percent Liability to Remaining Defendant

ST. LOUIS -- A Missouri jury has awarded \$4.1 million to the widow of a former electrician, allocating five percent liability to the remaining defendant, a manufacturer of fixture wire.

The Missouri 22nd Judicial Circuit Court reached the verdict on Jan. 25 after a one-week trial and nine hours of deliberations, sources said.

The plaintiffs contended in their complaint that Keith Urbach developed mesothelioma as a result of exposure to asbestos-containing products during his career as an electrician. Urbach died six months after he was diagnosed, according to the plaintiffs.

Jurors assessed five percent liability to the Okonite Co., which the plaintiffs contended manufactured a fixture wire containing asbestos. Okonite was the lone remaining defendant at the time of the verdict, sources said.

Sources told HarrisMartin that the jury found that Okonite was negligent and that this negligence was a cause of Urbach's injury. Jurors assigned the remaining 95 percent liability to a number of parties not involved with the case at the time of the verdict, including 3M Co., General Electric and Union Carbide. The most liability was assigned to the University of Wisconsin, one of Urbach's former employers.

The jury's award was broken into \$165,000 for medical expenses; \$1,825,000 for pain and suffering; \$350,000 for pre-death loss of society and companionship; and \$1,825,000 for post-death loss of society and companionship.

The plaintiffs were represented by Jay Stuemke and Hutton Sentell of Simon Greenstone Panatier Bartlett in Dallas.

Urbach v. The Okonite Co., No. 1122-CC-10636 (Mo. 22nd Jud. Cir. Ct.).

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