

Missouri Lawyers

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WEEKLY

■ \$7.5 MILLION JUDGMENT

Child wins judgment for crash that killed mother

MOTOR VEHICLE COLLISION

■ **Venue:** Jackson County Circuit Court at Independence

■ **Case Number/Date:** 1716-CV17020/Aug. 22, 2017

■ **Judge:** Jack Grate

■ **Caption:** B.H., a minor, by and through guardian ad litem v. Latasha Green, by and through defendant ad litem

■ **Plaintiff's Expert:** Joe Holt (cognitive dysfunction)

■ **Plaintiff's Attorneys:** Ben Friesen and Steve Torline, Kuckelman Torline Kirkland, Overland Park, Kansas

■ **Defendant's Attorney:** William P. Ronan, Ronan Law Firm, Overland Park, Kansas

BY SCOTT LAUCK
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A child injured in a rollover crash when he was 2 years old was awarded \$7.5 million, which his attorneys now hope to collect from an



Ben Friesen

insurance policy for his mother who was killed in the crash.

In 2014, the child, referred to as B.H. in court records, was in the back seat of his mother's vehicle. His mother, Latasha Green, sat in the passenger seat while Anthony Harris drove.

According to the suit and court records, Harris was intoxicated and fleeing from police when the car rolled on a sharp turn on a winding road in Kansas City. The crash destroyed residen-



Steve Torline

tial mailboxes, broke the metal guard rail on the side of the road and left divots in driveways. Both Green and B.H. were thrown from the wreck. Green died at the hospital, while B.H. was found crying in the roadway and was treated for head injuries.

Ben Friesen and Steve Torline, attorneys for B.H., filed a lawsuit alleging that Green had negligently entrusted her vehicle to Harris even though he was visibly and noticeably drunk. Friesen

said the suit didn't name Harris because he had no assets and is in prison. According to court records, he pleaded guilty to charges including involuntary manslaughter in connection with Green's death.

Friesen said at the time of the bench trial, B.H., now 5, had incurred economic expenses of only \$14,000, so the evidence focused on the "grievous psychological, cognitive, and developmental complications he suffered and is at risk of developing in the future as a result of the gut-wrenching trauma from this crash."

Jackson County Circuit Judge Jack Grate entered a judgment for B.H. for \$7.5 million. A garnishment action is pending against the insurer for Green's vehicle seeking to collect the judgment.