

A Triumphant Return to the Classroom

After a fully loaded commercial semi-tractor and trailer going 50 mph ran a stop sign and crashed into Michael Hilber's vehicle, he was in a coma for six weeks and couldn't talk for three months due to his tracheotomy. He endured 16 surgical procedures and is lucky to be alive. Although awake at the scene, he crashed after being air lifted to North Memorial Hospital and that would be the start of many touch and go situations for Michael and his family.

He was on his way to school in Anoka where he taught engineering to 11th and 12th grade students and had driven this exact route hundreds of times. Only this day, January 2nd, 2007, his ride to school would forever change his life.

His internal injuries were so extensive the doctors couldn't fix everything at one time. He went through weeks of surgeries as the

doctors prioritized which operation could be attempted next. His wife and two sons were told on more than one occasion that he may not make it through the night, next day or week. Everyday he remained alive was considered a victory.

Michael's son was referred to Soucie and Bolt the day of the accident and by that evening, Fred Soucie was on the case. He met with the family and told Michael's wife Kathy, "I don't care what happens or what goes on, you worry about your husband and let me worry about the rest." Kathy said Fred took care of the hospital bills, the insurance, getting Michael's long term disability from the school district and anything else that needed to be done. Fred asked them to send him any bill that showed up. Michael was relieved to wake up from his coma to see that his wife and sons had been taken care of, that Fred had made an extremely difficult time easier for them.

As the case prepared for litigation, Fred kept them informed. If something didn't go well, he told them. Michael appreciated Fred's approach. "He didn't waiver, Fred always told me, 'This is what we are going to do and this is what will happen' and then he did it. He also reassured me that my family and I would be taken care of without losing our home, my job or anything else and I believed him. It has been incredibly difficult, mentally and physically, to handle all that has happened from the day of the accident through the settlement, but Fred helped me get through it, understand and accept each step."

Michael missed the second semester of school. He couldn't walk until April and spent all spring and summer in rehab but was released the week before school started and went back to teaching in August.

"My wife and I weren't able to work for months. Fred said he would take care of everything and he did. Because of his support and involvement, I had minimal financial worries and could concentrate on getting better. With the settlement he secured, we were able to recover financially unlike many other people who never dig their way out of debt after a situation like this. Fred still calls to see how I am. I'm on his family list now."



... because bad things happen to good people

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Office Accolades

Fred Soucie, Dave Bolt and Christopher Hoffer have all been named a "Super Lawyer™" with a listing in *Minnesota Law & Politics* and *TwinCities Business* magazines for 2008.

The award is chosen by a statewide survey of attorneys each year to honor those outstanding in their field.

Fred has also been honored by being named a "Top 40 Personal Injury Attorney" and a "Top 100 Lawyer" as listed in *Minnesota Law & Politics*.

As always, if you know of someone who has been injured or killed in an accident, car collision, electrical or power line incident, or other circumstance that requires expert legal help, please call us at 763 427 8888.

