

Fighting for bicyclists: The Story of Scott Nelson

Scott Nelson was proud of his self-sufficiency. He had a job as a dishwasher that supported him and his wife and paid for an efficiency apartment in Elk River. Although he did not drive, Scott made it to work on time every day by riding his bicycle along U.S. Highway 10.

Scott was a careful bicyclist. He followed the rules of the road by riding with the direction of traffic and signaling turns. But early on a fall October morning, something went terribly wrong. As he rode his bicycle to work that morning and crossed an exit ramp, a car struck him.

Due to a permanent brain injury, Scott can no longer work, live independently or take care of himself. But thanks to a

substantial settlement won by Fred Soucie after lengthy litigation, Scott and his family finally received financial compensation that will help him throughout the rest of his life.

Bicycles are legal transportation on Minnesota highways. But attorneys defending the driver and her employer, the Star Tribune Company, claimed that Nelson assumed the risk of traveling on a busy highway; even though he had a legal right to be there. They also claimed that the driver was not an employee so the Star Tribune had no liability for her driving conduct.

Soucie proved with expert testimony from the world of cycling that Scott Nelson was following the rules of the road according to police reports and witnesses.

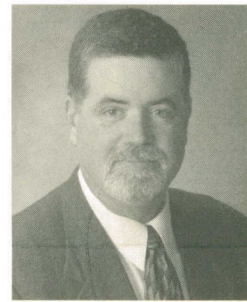
"He was on the right hand side of the continuing lane of traffic where he was entitled to be; it was not a restricted access highway," Soucie said. "It was his transportation to work, and he had to be there."

The settlement will provide for a trust in Nelson's name to care for his future needs. And the case sets a strong precedent for bicyclist's rights in the state and nation.

Accolades in the office

While there are many attorneys who take personal injury cases in Minnesota, only a few are recognized by their peers for their focus, excellence and dedication to clients. Fred Soucie and Dave Bolt were recently listed as Top 40 Personal Injury Lawyers and named Minnesota Super Lawyers 2006.

Soucie and Bolt is proud to welcome Terry Petersen



Terry has spent 22 years as a personal injury attorney litigating cases for both plaintiffs and defendants. In his extensive experience with

two large national insurance companies, he came to know Soucie & Bolt for their first-class representation and respect for their clients. In the same way, Terry has earned a reputation for working hard for clients and fighting for their rights. He feels a sense of accomplishment when his efforts result in helping clients put their lives together after an injury.

"Soucie & Bolt's unmatched legal skills and no-nonsense way of practicing law made it an easy choice when they asked me to join the firm," Terry says. Terry is a graduate of Hamline University School of Law and is a member of the American, Minnesota and Ramsey County Bar Associations. He is also a Scoutmaster, enjoys the outdoors and spending time at his cabin in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. He and his wife, Patti, have three children.



... because bad things happen to *good* people

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Minnesota Bicycle Laws

The following is an abridged summary of Minnesota Statutes Sect. 169.222 & 169.18 as they relate to operating a bicycle. Adhering to these laws will maximize your chances for safe riding.

Ride on the right with traffic and obey all traffic signs and signals.

Bicyclists have all the rights/duties of any other vehicle driver.

Legal lights and reflectors are required at night.

Continuous arm signal is required during the last 100 feet prior to turn or lane change (unless arm is needed to control bike) and while stopped waiting to turn.

You may ride two abreast on roadways as long as you don't impede normal and reasonable movement of traffic. Ride in single lane.

Ride as close as practicable to right hand curb or edge of roadway except when overtaking a vehicle, preparing for a left turn or if its necessary to avoid conditions that make it unsafe.

Yield to pedestrians on sidewalks and crosswalks; give an audible signal when necessary before overtaking. No riding on sidewalks within business districts unless permitted.

No hitching rides on other vehicles.

Only one person on a bike unless equipped for more, or legal baby seat is used.

Don't carry anything that prevents keeping one hand on handlebars or proper operation of brakes.

Brakes must allow skidding on dry, level, clean pavement.

Handlebars must not be above shoulder level.

Bicycle size must allow safe operation.

On sidewalks, parking that does not impede normal and reasonable movement of pedestrians or other traffic is allowed unless locally restricted.

Legal parking on a roadway, that does not obstruct legally parked motor vehicles, is allowable.

Safe bicycle events approved by local authorities, which do not seriously inconvenience other highway users, are not unlawful. Traffic laws can be waived.

When passing a bicycle or pedestrian, motor vehicles shall leave at least 3 feet clearance until safely past the bicycle or pedestrian.

This information was taken from the Minneapolis/St. Paul Hiawatha Bicycling Club's web site, www.hiawathabike.org.

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.