

Business

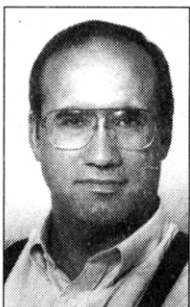
Case won for man killed in power line incident

Anoka attorney Fred Soucie recently won a verdict for the family of a 36-year-old husband and father, Gregory Hokkala, who was killed in 1996 during a power line incident. The case was tried in Anoka County District Court and the jury returned a verdict of \$2,206,000 for the family of Hokkala.

Hokkala was electrocuted when the driver of a dump truck lifted the truck box into an overhead power line, and Hokkala, who was on the ground, came in contact with the truck while it was electrified. The defendant dump truck driver immediately blamed Hokkala for his own death.

"We just knew that wasn't true," Soucie said. "Greg was very well known as a very safety conscious person and the dump truck driver's story just didn't seem to square with the facts of the case. I never believed the dump truck driver."

Hokkala's wife, Vicki, knew her husband was too careful and respectful of electricity to have done what the dump truck driver claimed so she sought legal help. She contacted Attorney Miles Lord, who knew about Fred Soucie's reputation with power companies and cases involving power line deaths and injuries, and who directed her to work with Soucie.



Fred Soucie

"Fred was wonderful," Vicki said. "He became a part of our family and got to know us really well. We were told from the beginning that it was a tough case, but Fred helped us through it all."

Reconstructing the scene is one of the most crucial aspects of a personal injury or death case. Using a group of expert witnesses, the team at Soucie & Bolt put together the details of the accident. While the truck driver maintained Hokkala was holding onto the truck with his right hand after supposedly giving directions, the medical experts showed that the current entered Hokkala's body at his left thumb tip. Electrical experts studied the burn marks from the current running through the truck and into the driveway.

"Because we have worked on big power line cases in the past, we knew many expert witnesses who did an excellent job of revealing the truth behind the tragic death of this fine, fine young father and husband," Soucie said.

"Fred put the whole case together and found out the truth about how Greg died. The jury believed us and we won the case," Vicki said. She said she hoped no one ever has to go through what her family did. "But if any family does, no doubt I would recommend talking to Fred Soucie."