

# SOUCIE LAW NEWS

SOUCIE LAW  
FOR THE INJURED

*We Care and We Can Help*

DECEMBER 2013

GREETINGS FROM FRED • IN THE LINE OF DUTY • SLOW DOWN OR MOVE OVER



## GREETINGS FROM FRED

*I'm excited to share the story below that demonstrates how Soucie Law is serving the needs of others as a member of the Sieben, Grose, VonHoltum & Carey legal team.*

*Finding the right attorney with the experience and expertise to handle your case can be a difficult task, especially when you or a loved one are injured. You need an attorney who listens and who can advise the right course of action.*

*We're ready to listen, and we're here to help you navigate the complexity of the legal process and pair you with the best possible legal representation.*

*In our fight for justice, Soucie Law and Sieben, Grose, VonHoltum & Carey has led the way in Minnesota for victims of negligence. Harry Sieben and I go back over 30 years, and share a philosophy: Take care of people.*

## IN THE LINE OF DUTY

Mike Bell's State Trooper squad car is smashed almost beyond recognition. Mike is struggling to regain consciousness. He hears someone moaning. He doesn't realize the moans are his own.

### Earlier that Day

Mike woke up early one cold winter morning, February 21, 2011. He shaved, showered and donned his Minnesota State Trooper uniform, fastening his heavy belt. He sat down and had breakfast with his beautiful wife, Christi, and their three children, Jonathan, Kathryn and Elizabeth. During breakfast Mike looked out the window and saw that it was snowing. Mike knew it was going to be a tough day. The snowstorm that hit Minnesota was the largest snowfall recorded for February since 1891. Mike kissed Christi and the kids goodbye. As he walked out the door, Christi said, "Be careful, Mike. Please be careful."

Before long, Mike received a call to an accident scene on westbound I-94 near Highway 23. Dispatch informed him there were multiple vehicles in the snowbound center median.

### The Scene

Mike's adrenaline is pumping as he arrives at the scene. He sees there are two cars buried in the snow in the median, and one of the drivers is outside his car. This is just plain dangerous. Mike protects the scene

by pulling onto the median shoulder with all of his squad's flashing lights activated. Mike steps out of his patrol car and yells to the motorist, "Get back in your car and stay there!" Mike then checks the other car, finding the driver is conscious. Mike calls for a tow truck and backs the squad up on the shoulder, lights still flashing, to warn oncoming motorists.

The road conditions are slushy, with snow still falling. Traffic has slowed. The flashing lights on Mike's patrol car are visible to approaching traffic for **over three-quarters of a mile**. Cars and semis go by at 35-40 m.p.h., reacting to the flashing lights and steering clear to the right-hand shoulder lane. Mike's dash cam records 72 vehicles carefully proceeding westbound in the right lane of traffic at reduced speed, appropriate for the road conditions. A large tow truck arrives with all of **its** emergency lights flashing, and maneuvers onto the median shoulder as well. The scene is lit up brighter than a Broadway marquee. *There is no way any approaching driver could possibly miss the fact that this is an accident scene requiring caution, right?* The dash cam records what happens next. A semi-truck smashes into Mike's patrol car at a high rate of speed, and then crashes into the tow truck. Mike's patrol car is spun around as it is hurled forward.

Mike is knocked out by the impact. As Mike slowly regains consciousness, he remembers

nothing of the impact or its aftermath for several minutes. He has no idea of how this collision is going to affect his future. In the collision, Mike suffers: a concussion with amnesia for the event; serious damage to his neck which will require neurosurgery with a fusion and instrumentation in his cervical spine; chronic severe low back pain; a serious bout of pneumonia; and the anxiety of the financial stress of the inability to work. He will also face the hassle and red tape of a complicated worker's compensation claim, as well as a personal injury claim enforcing his rights against this unbelievably negligent semi driver.

### Mike Meets Fred

Trooper Bell had first met Fred Soucie a few years earlier when Fred represented the family of a man killed in an accident involving an out of control semi. Fred initially met with Mike, the responding trooper in that fatality, and later followed up with him by phone to request information and documentation regarding the cause of the fatal crash.

During that experience, Mike grew to appreciate Fred's dedication to his client, his straight forward manner, and learned of Fred's reputation as the "go to guy" for Minnesota law enforcement officers injured in the line of duty.

### Mike Gets Help

The day after the accident, Mike asked his

*continued on other side*

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## ***SLOW DOWN or MOVE OVER for EMERGENCY VEHICLES!!***

*Minnesota law requires that all vehicles safely move to the lane farthest away from an emergency vehicle.*



## **IN THE LINE OF DUTY**

*continued from other side*

wife to call Fred. "I had to have help, and I thought of Fred," said Mike. Within twenty-four hours, Fred and his paralegal met with Mike and his family.

"I was comfortable with Fred almost within one minute," recalls Mike. "He looked you in the eye and was very up-front." Mike knew Fred was taking his case seriously, not only for himself, but for his entire family.

"With Fred on board, I knew I didn't have to take care of all of the red tape and hassle. I had enough to worry about," said Mike. "Fred and his staff took care of everything for me so I could work at getting better. A lot of things that happened were emotionally upsetting but I always knew I could call Fred, day or night," said Mike.

Fred conducted a thorough investigation, documenting all aspects of the crash. "Fred was there for me and told me that there were 'no dumb questions or small concerns,' and if I felt I needed to talk to him about anything, he wanted me to call him." In the months following the accident Mike's fingers went numb, and he lost his gripping ability. "I couldn't grip a milk jug or open jars," said Mike. Also, Mike developed pneumonia

and spent nearly eight days in the hospital. He grew weak and lost weight. "I just didn't have the energy or the strength to deal with all the hassle. Fred took care of that for me so that I could concentrate on healing," Mike stated.

Mike just wanted to get back in the saddle and return to the work he relied upon to feed his family. "I just felt like I was too young to not do what I wanted to do, says Mike. During this whole time, I knew my family would be taken care of because of the work that Fred was doing for us," said Mike.

When Fred joined the Sieben, Grose, Von Holtum and Carey firm, Fred arranged for he and Mike to sit down with long time trial lawyer, Harry Sieben. Mike said "By that time, I completely trusted Fred. He told me he wanted me to meet Harry." Mike describes Harry as a "military guy," and discovered they had similar philosophies. He was instantly comfortable with both Harry and Fred helping him.

With both Soucie Law and Sieben, Grose, Von Holtum and Carey representing him, Mike felt taken care of. "I never had to hound anyone," Mike says about the status

of the case. "That part I didn't worry about at all. Both Fred and Harry were always available on their cell phone, and would call me back right away if I had to leave a message," says Mike.

With Fred and Harry's help, Mike could focus on healing and his recovery. After suffering through a surgery, he rehabbed himself tenaciously, and eventually was able to return to his duties as a State Trooper.

Fred and Harry were gratified to be able to assist this wonderful, dedicated public servant and his family. Fred started a lawsuit on behalf of Mike which Harry pushed hard to get to trial. The insurance company and Mike settled before trial.

That's exactly what Fred has been doing for the last 35 years and looks forward to doing that as part of the Sieben, Grose, Von Holtum and Carey firm for the next 35 years. "I worry, so you don't have to," Fred tells all his clients.

**If you or someone you know is in need of help with a personal injury or wrongful death, please contact Fred at Soucie Law, (763) 427-8888.**