

The Alabama Jury Verdict Reporter

The Most Current and Complete Summary of Alabama Jury Verdicts

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Statewide Jury Verdict Coverage - Published Monthly

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Alabama's Jury Verdict Reporter Since 2001

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Civil Jury Verdicts

Complete and timely coverage of civil jury verdicts in Alabama including circuit, presiding judge, parties, case number, attorneys and results.

Uninsured Motorist - A doctor was t-boned in an intersection by an uninsured driver and suffered a torn biceps tendon and a permanent "Popeye" deformity; the doctor's wife, who also made a consortium claim, happened to be an attorney and elected to represent herself and her husband in the lawsuit against their own insurer

Wood v. State Farm, et al., 18-900157
Plaintiff: Jennifer A. Wood, Auburn
Defense: S. Scott Sasser, *Webster Henry Bradwell Cohan Speagle & DeShazo, P.C.*, Auburn
Verdict: \$700,000 for plaintiffs
Circuit: **Lee**, 4-24-22
Judge: Jacob A. Walker, III

In the early evening of 4-26-16, Brian Wood was driving a 2008 Honda Ridgeline pickup in Auburn where he maintains a medical practice as a primary care physician. Wood was traveling west on Sandhill Road. At the same time, Mark Stafford was driving south on South College Street in a 2009 BMW 328i.

Sandhill Road is controlled by a stop sign at the intersection of the two roads. Wood stopped at the stop sign with the intention of proceeding across four lanes of traffic to reach the other side. The parties would offer differing accounts of what happened next.

According to Wood, Stafford was speeding toward the intersection at between 69 to 78 mph in a 55 mph zone. Stafford was also allegedly weaving in and out of traffic in a dangerous manner. Wood claims that Stafford was in the right turn lane as he approached the intersection but then illegally switched to the through lane and continued into the intersection.

Wood did not see Stafford approaching. He and Stafford entered the intersection at the same time, and Stafford crashed into the passenger side of Wood's pickup. The impact pushed Wood's vehicle sideways approximately 157.9 feet and caused him to run over a stop sign, flatten a yield sign, leave the road, and finally come to rest after hitting a utility pole.

Both vehicles were totaled in the crash. Wood was knocked unconscious, and his left bicep tendon was severed. As a result of that injury, Wood has been left with a permanent "Popeye" deformity (i.e., a condition in which the bicep muscle bunches up and forms a ball in the upper arm), and he has suffered a 10 - 15% loss of the use of his left arm. Wood claims to have incurred medical expenses of \$12,040. However, there would later be some dispute over the accuracy of that figure.

In any event, Wood filed suit against Stafford and blamed him for driving recklessly and causing the crash. Wood's wife, Jennifer Wood, also presented a derivative claim for her loss of consortium. Plaintiffs alleged counts for both negligence and wantonness.

It turned out that Stafford was uninsured. Accordingly, plaintiffs made an uninsured motorist claim against their own insurer, State Farm. Plaintiffs had three policies with State Farm, and the total available UM coverage was \$750,000.

As it happened, Jennifer Wood is an attorney. That being the case she elected to represent herself and her husband in the litigation. The