

# The Tennessee Jury Verdict Reporter

The Most Current and Complete Summary of Tennessee Jury Verdicts

April, 2005

Statewide Jury Verdict Coverage

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*Unbiased and Independently Researched Jury Verdict Results*

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### Notable Out of State Verdict

## Civil Jury Verdicts

Timely coverage of civil jury verdicts in Tennessee including court, division, presiding judge, parties, case number, attorneys and results.

**Products Liability - A family of four, traveling in a heavy duty Ford pick-up, were killed in a catastrophic and fiery interstate crash -- their estates blamed their deaths on a negligently designed fuel system that was prone to incursion and then fire**  
*Teets v. Ford Motor Company*,  
3:01-CV-415

Plaintiff: Joe C. Savage, *Savage Elliott Houlihan Moore Mullins & Erdmann*, Lexington, KY, John A. McReynolds, *Shea & McReynolds*, Knoxville, Lee L. Piovarcy and Lauri Hays Prather, *Martin Tate Morrow & Marston*, Memphis and James D. Rouse, Versailles

Defense: Joseph K. Reid, III and Perry W. Miles, IV, *McGuire Woods*, Richmond, VA and J. Randolph Bibb, Nashville and Ashley Meredith Lowe, Knoxville, both of *Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz*

Verdict: Defense verdict

Federal: **Knoxville**

Judge: R. Leon Jordan  
1-21-05

A tragic set of events started on the afternoon of 3-11-01 with the fateful decision of a teenage girl, Miracle Woodall and her mother, Brenda. It began as Miracle drove home on northbound I-75 from her boyfriend's house in a 1998 Dodge van. Her van became disabled and Miracle pulled into a gas station off the interstate.

The van was still not doing well, but Miracle made a decision to keep going. Soon after, it became disabled on I-75. Miracle called her mother, Brenda, who came to the scene in her 1997 Mazda.

The two made an incredible decision -- they decided to push the van to safety on the busy three-lane I-75. Unbelievably, they decided to do this in the middle lane. They proceeded at slow speed on I-75 near its intersection with I-40.

Behind them, a driver, Julie Goodrum saw the slow moving vehicles and started to slow down. A second car, a 1999 Ford F-350, was also driving on northbound I-75. It contained the Teets family from Lexington, KY, which was returning home from a family get-together.

Driving the truck was Aaron Teets, age 26. The patriarch of this family, all of whom worked in the HVAC business, Patrick Teets, age 49, sat in the front seat. Also in the F-350 were Aaron's two sons, John, age 2, and Samuel, nine months old.

There would be fact disputes about precisely what happened next. Either the Teets vehicle was moving at slow speed or it was stationary -- in any event, it presented a hazard in the roadway.

A first trucker, Jonathan Ramseur, saw it on the interstate -- he hit the brakes and swerved left. He collided with a Jeep and avoided hitting the F-350. However behind Ramseur was Derek Evans, driving a loaded (80,000 pound) tractor-trailer for Millennium Trucking.

Evans couldn't react in time. He plowed into the Teets truck. It struck Goodrum's sedan and then careened two hundred feet off the roadway. Now off the interstate, the F-350 exploded into flames which shot into the sky. All four Teets died in the fire -- the oldest passenger, Patrick, was ejected.

Their estates pursued Ford in a federal products liability lawsuit. They