

The Louisiana Jury Verdict Reporter

The Most Current and Complete Summary of Louisiana Jury Verdicts

April 2026

Statewide Jury Verdict Coverage

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Civil Jury Verdicts

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

Civil Rights - A man with emotional disabilities liked to hang out and shop at a Hobby Lobby in Harahan near his home – he would sometimes take up a lot of cashier time to assist him in calculating his purchases and the Monday after Thanksgiving when the store was very busy, a new manager told him there wasn't time to deal with him – things escalated (there were fact disputes), the police were called and the man (he's harmless and had never been charged with a crime) ended up pepper-sprayed and jailed – in this lawsuit the man alleged Hobby Lobby engaged in disability discrimination in violation of both state and federal law – he prevailed at trial on the state court count and took compensatory damages of \$10,000

George v. Hobby Lobby, 2:24-2528

Plaintiff: Christopher F. Edmunds, New Orleans

Defense: Hal D. Ungar and Sara G. Sirera, *Ogletree Deakins*, New Orleans

Verdict: \$10,000 for plaintiff

Federal: **New Orleans**

Judge: Barry W. Ashe

Date: 3-20-26

Charles "Chip" George, age 67, very much liked to shop, browse and hang out at a Hobby Lobby retail store on Citrus Boulevard in Harahan, LA. George has mental and intellectual disabilities as well as a speech impediment that would be immediately obvious to anyone. He suffered a vaccine injury as an infant and his condition was made worse when he was struck by a car at age 8.

George lived with his sisters who managed his affairs.

Every Monday George was provided a \$100 weekly allowance by his sisters. It cannot be overstated how much he enjoyed shopping at Hobby Lobby and he came almost every day. He'd visit the store for hours and peruse the merchandise. Hobby Lobby is a craft store and is famous for having Christian beliefs. The actual company (it's privately owned) has those beliefs and they are reflected both in the merchandise sold and its operations. George had been a regular customer for years and he'd been accommodated by staff without incident. George was friendly and his love for Hobby Lobby was clear.

The Monday of 11-27-23 was like any other for George. He had his allowance from his sisters and he walked from his nearby home to the store to shop. While it was just Monday for George (shopping and hanging around Hobby Lobby), it was quite a busy day there. Hobby Lobby (because of its corporate belief in God) does not observe the pagan Black Friday shopping holiday and it remains closed on Sunday so its employees can enjoy the Sabbath. Thus the Monday after Black Friday is quite busy.

There was also a new manager (Heather) in the store that day. Heather had been at Hobby Lobby for a time, but her tenure in management was new. George recalled that before she became manager, he believed she was hostile to him. She thought it was a waste of time to assist the man. He'd

Historical Louisiana Verdict

Marine Negligence - Seventy-eight persons were killed in the tragic M/V George Prince disaster on the Mississippi River in October of 1976 – all the claims settled but one, a deceased passenger on the ferry whose estate came to trial a year later in 1977

Jones v. SS Frosta
\$52,000 for plaintiff
New Orleans (Federal)
Judge: Alvin B. Rubin
Date: November 7, 1977

There was an enormous maritime tragedy on the Mississippi River on the morning of October 20, 1976. Just before dawn, the M/V George Prince, a ferry operating from Destrehan to Luling across the Mississippi River (near the site of the then under construction Luling Bridge) was loaded with cars. Its pilot was intoxicated with a BAC of .9. The 120-foot M/V George Prince sailed into the path of an oncoming Norwegian oil tanker, SS Frosta. The SS Frosta was 664 feet long.

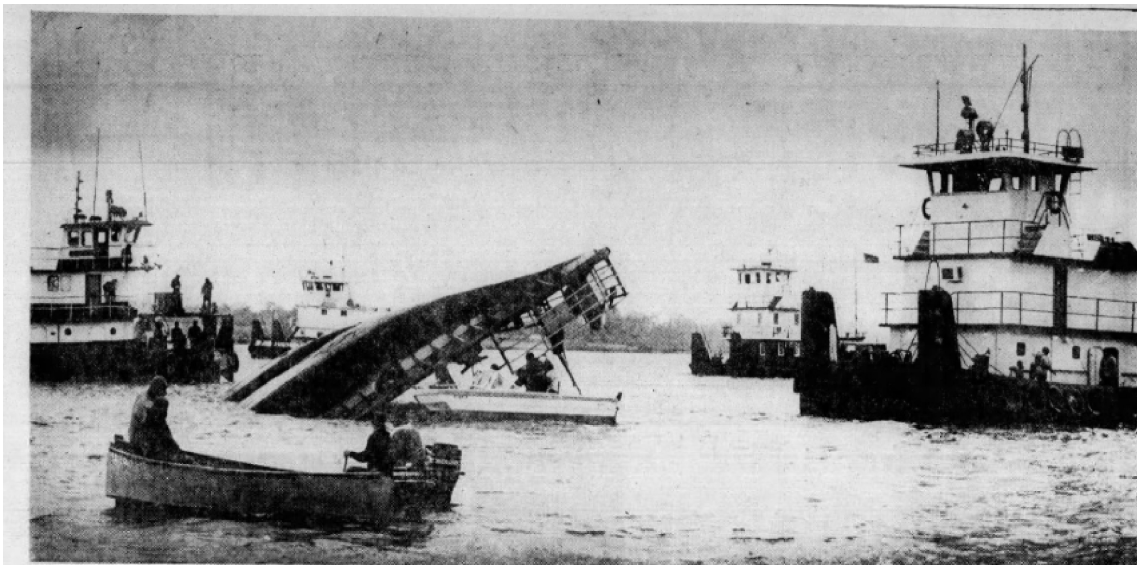
The tanker saw the ferry and radioed its position. The ferry didn't

respond. The tanker blew its horn. The ferry still didn't change its path. Time had run out. The tanker plowed into the side of the ferry. The ferry almost instantly capsized. There were 96 persons onboard the ferry. All but 18 perished in the river.

The human tragedy was immense but such tragedies also have a legal element. Louis Koerner, a New Orleans attorney, acted quickly to file a vessel seizure claim against the SS Frosta on the same day of the accident. This allowed the United States to retain jurisdiction over the vessel and its crew as witnesses.

Thereafter the plaintiffs (the estates and the injured) pursued claims against the ferry (it was operated by the State of Louisiana) as well as against the SS Frosta. The claims settled for some \$24 million.

There was a single plaintiff who did not settle. That was the estate of Robert Malcolm Jones, Jr. of Harvey whose body was found a few days after the accident. The case was tried a little more than a year later in federal court before Judge Alvin Rubin in New Orleans. Thirteen months is an astonishing litigation turnaround in such



—Staff photo by G. E. Arnold

SCENE OF UPRIVER FERRY DISASTER WHERE SCORES ARE MISSING IS PANORAMA OF ACTIVITY

Disaster Toll Might Rise to 100

By CHRIS SEGURA, ED ANDERSON and JOHN LaPLACE

The death toll from the collision of a Norwegian tanker and a ferry near Luling early Wednesday could reach 100 or more, St. Charles Parish authorities said Wednesday night.

Nightfall ended the attempt to bring more bodies up from the Mississippi. During the daylight hours, 18 persons were hauled alive from the water. Twenty-two bodies were recovered.

Sunrise had just begun to illuminate the river when the tanker Frosta "loomed up" with its whistle screaming at the

side of the ferry and plowed into the 120-foot George Prince.

The George Prince capsized, spilling pedestrians and vehicles into the river trapping others inside.

Police say 22 bodies were recovered. However, identifications gathered from items such as driver's licenses floating

Picture page in Sec. 1, Page 18. Related stories in Sec. 1, Pages 2, 3, 4, 5, 9, 12, 13 and 19.

on the surface of the river indicate at least 60 persons are unaccounted for.

This leads state police to set the death estimate at 80. A spokesman for the State Department of Administration, however, said the figure could reach 100. The State Department of Administra-

tion is handling the salvage and rescue operation.

St. Charles Parish Sheriff John St. Amant said of the count, "You can figure the figures will go over 100 total. . . There were 24 to 26 cars on the ferry and you can bet your bottom dollar every one of those cars were full."

Rescuers late Wednesday did not expect to find more survivors.

An attempt to right the capsized George Prince, resting with its stern end in the mud and 15 feet of its bow out of the water, will continue through the night with the help of a crane loaned by Avon-

dale shipyards. Officials expected the vessel to be righted by shortly after midnight.

The last six bodies were discovered by divers at 2:30 p.m. working inside the partially submerged vessel. The bodies were found in the engine room.

At approximately 3 p.m., the George Prince's sister ferry, the Ollie K. Wilds,

resumed ferry service. River traffic utilizing one lane in the area had also resumed, Coast Guard spokesmen said.

The Ollie K. Wilds was one of the first vessels to come to the aid of the victims of the disaster.

Sources for the State Department of Administration said an attempt was being made to secure the services either

of a ferry in Plaquemines Parish or one nearly finished at a shipyard in Donaldsonville.

Police said 18 persons had been rescued, but identifications were available on only 14. Identified were:

Cont. in Sec. 1, Page 11, Col. 3



The headlines the next day were grim as the scope of the accident was still unknown

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