

The Mississippi Jury Verdict Reporter

The Most Current and Complete Summary of Mississippi Jury Verdicts

February 2026

Statewide Jury Verdict Coverage

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Medical Malpractice - The plaintiff suffered a colon injury during a laparoscopic appendectomy and while the surgeon opened the surgery, repaired the injury and removed the appendix, the plaintiff still suffered leakage from the colon injury and died days later of septic shock several days later

Peterson v. Blake, 19-56

Plaintiff: David E. Goodman, Jr. and Les Jones, *Burch Porter & Johnson*, Memphis

Defense: Whitman B. Johnson, III and Lisa W. McKay, *Currie Johnson & Myers*, Flowood

Verdict: Defense verdict on liability

Court: **Bolivar**

Judge: Charles E. Webster

Date: 1-14-26

Veltha Lee Peterson, age 62, presented to the Bolivar Medical Center on 6-28-17. She was diagnosed as suffering from an appendicitis. Peterson was taken into surgery by Dr. Roger Blake for an appendectomy. Blake began the procedure by a laparoscopic method.

Blake realized quickly that upon entry he had injured Peterson's colon. He converted to an open surgery and repaired the colon injury. Blake continued the surgery and removed the appendix uneventfully.

Peterson declined the next day and was taken to the ICU. She showed signs of an infection including sepsis and renal failure. A day later Peterson was transferred to St. Francis in Memphis. She was

identified as being in septic shock. Dr. Ben Peterson performed an exploratory laparotomy in Memphis and noted a colon injury. Peterson continued to decline and died the next day of complications related to the colon injury.

Peterson's estate (representing her daughter on behalf of all the wrongful death beneficiaries) sued Blake.

Malpractice was alleged on the part of Blake in first injuring the colon upon entry, and then failing to timely recognize the signs of an infection. The plaintiff's liability expert was Dr. Jeffrey Allen, Surgery, Louisville, KY.

Blake replied that the initial colon injury was a known risk and a surgical complication. Moreover he promptly identified and repaired it. Then as Peterson's condition declined, he appropriately transferred her to Memphis for a higher level of care. The identified defense experts were Dr. Claude Minor, Surgery, now of Wyoming and Dr. Steven Stogner, Surgery, Hattiesburg.

This case was tried for three days in Cleveland and the jury deliberated just twenty minutes. The verdict was for Blake and the estate. This is gleaned from the final judgment as neither the jury instructions nor the verdict itself are a part of the court record. There was no appeal from the judgment (entered 1-30-26) and the case is closed.

Case Documents:

[Complaint](#)

[Pretrial Order](#)

[Final Judgment](#)

Thereafter he cited confusion as to the timing of the damages hearing, and sought to set aside the default. Judge Thompson did so. Cubley then defended on the merits and denied the allegations.

The case was tried for three days in Laurel. The jury returned a handwritten verdict for Cubley and Matthews took nothing. At the time of this report, no final judgment had been entered.

Case Documents:

[Complaint](#)
[Jury Verdict](#)

Notable Appellate Opinion

The Mississippi Court of Appeals reversed a MTCA \$500,000 med mal bench verdict against the University of Mississippi Medical Center (UMMC) on 2-24-26. The plaintiff (an end-stage renal patient) had alleged he suffered a hand injury related to malpractice by UMMC nurses in allowing an IV to be infiltrated as well as not advising UMMC physicians regarding wound care evaluations. The presiding Judge Wooten found for the plaintiff that the UMMC nurses had “gravely” violated the standard of care. UMMC had replied at trial that infiltration is always a risk of an IV. The trial court awarded the statutory maximum of \$500,000, representing non-economic damages of \$108,164 and \$391,835 more in non-economic damages.

UMMC took an appeal and the Mississippi Court of Appeals, Judge Lassitter St. Pe writing reversed. The court concluded that the opinion of the plaintiff’s expert, Dr. Sonny Bal, Orthopedics, Columbia, MO, was defective on causation. Why? While the plaintiff did have a hand injury (described as a rare condition, calciphylaxis) related to the infiltration, he conceded there were other causes. Thus his final proximate causation conclusion was based on “mere speculation.” The appellate court reversed and remanded with instructions to enter a defense judgment. Judges Westbrook and Lawrence separately dissented on the causation question.

Joseph G. Baladi, Corey D. Hinshaw and J. Collins Wohner, Jr., *Watkins & Eager*, Jackson for UMMC (appellant)

Raymond P. Gee, Jr. and Joe N. Tatum, *Tatum & Wade*, Jackson for underlying plaintiff (appellee)
UMMC v. Thomas, 2024-CA-1099

Case Documents:

[Original Verdict Report](#) (9-3-24)
[Appellate Opinion](#) (External link)

Historic Mississippi Verdict

Truck Negligence - An Ole Miss sophomore (he was intoxicated with a .17 BAC) crashed into a tractor-trailer on I-55 near Jackson that had stopped to assist a disabled motorist – a defense verdict was returned a year later in Hinds Circuit Court and the Supreme Court subsequently affirmed that result

Stong v. Freeman Truck Line, 53936

Plaintiff: Brad Sessums, *Young Scanlon & Sessums*, Jackson

Defense: Jimmie B. Reynolds and Whitman B. Johnson, III, *Steen Reynolds Dalehite & Currie*, Jackson

Verdict: Defense verdict on liability

Court: **Hinds**

Judge: Dan Lee

Date: May 1981

Kirk Stong, age 19, was a rising sophomore at Ole Miss on the Fourth of July weekend in 1980. He’d been a star athlete at St. Andrews a year earlier when he was named both the MVP of the football and basketball teams. This evening he’d been drinking beer at a fish fry and was intoxicated. His BAC would later be measured at .17.

Between 1:45 a.m. and 2:00 a.m. early the next morning (7-4-80), Stong traveled in a pick-up truck on southbound I-55. He was just outside the northern Jackson city limits. It was described as being near the location of the-then Holmes Volkswagen. Just a

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