

VERDICTS & SETTLEMENTS

\$436,898 SETTLEMENT

State settles after fatal crash at malfunctioning traffic light

■ Scott Lauck



Scott S. Bethune



Wes Shumate



Jared Brown

THE MISSOURI Highways and Transportation Commission agreed to pay approximately \$437,000 after a motorcyclist was struck and killed at an allegedly faulty stop light near Kansas City.

Richard Dean Williamson died on Dec. 26, 2018, as he was traveling eastbound on Missouri Highway 210. Velton Lester Peabody made a left-hand turn onto Eldon Avenue toward the Ameristar Casino. Williamson struck the back of Peabody's vehicle and was thrown from his motorcycle, then was struck by another motorist in the darkened intersection.

Peabody alleged that he had proceeded through the intersection after waiting through two or three cycles of the traffic signals without ever getting a green left turn signal. Danielle Williamson, the man's widow, alleged in a wrongful death lawsuit that the state highway department knew or should have known that the light there was "prone to malfunction" and was in a dangerous condition.

Jared Brown of Davis, Bethune & Jones, an attorney for the Williamson family, said the MHTC was aware of prior complaints concerning the traffic signals at the intersection. Customer call reports identified ongoing issues with the traffic signals, and witness testimony identified persistent issues with detection at the left turn signal specifically, he said.

A Clay County circuit judge approved a settlement of \$436,898.35 with the highway department, which did not admit fault, according to court records. The amount was based on the inflation-adjusted cap on awards against state entities. Claims against the at-fault driver were resolved confidentially. **MO**

SETTLEMENT REPORT- MOTOR VEHICLE COLLISION, WRONGFUL DEATH

VENUE: Clay County Circuit Court
CASE NUMBER/DATE: 19CY-CV 10596/April 1, 2022

JUDGE: Janet Sutton

CAPTION: Danielle Williamson v. Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission

PLAINTIFF'S ATTORNEYS: Scott S. Bethune, Wes Shumate and Jared Brown, Davis, Bethune & Jones, Kansas City

DEFENDANT'S ATTORNEYS: Bradley Nielson and Christopher Brackman, Franke Shultz & Mullen, Kansas City