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“\$50M Verdict”, Jury Awards Damages to Plantation Man Rendered Paraplegic by 1998 Traffic Accident By: Laurie Cunningham

A Miami-Dade Circuit Court jury has awarded more than \$50 million to a Marine veteran from Plantation who was paralyzed in an automobile accident while driving home from work in 1998.

The jury deliberated just two hours Tuesday before granting Frederick Wilson, his wife, and six of his eight children \$50.1 million as compensation for medical expenses and economic losses. In rendering its verdict, the jury found the driver of the other vehicle, 29-year-old Ronald Bottex of North Miami, liable for negligence.

Wilson, 49, suffered a broken neck and collarbone and brain hemorrhage. He spent more than a year in the hospital after the accident and suffered permanent disability.

“The details of what this has done to his family are almost beyond comprehension,” said Wilson’s attorney, John Uustal who works with prominent personal injury lawyer Sheldon Schlesinger in Fort Lauderdale. “This is not the situation of someone who got a very high verdict for some minor injury,” said Uustal. The trials, before Judge Barbara Levenson, lasted two days.

The jury awarded Wilson \$883,000 for past medical bills, \$19.5 million for future medical expenses, \$211,000 for lost earnings and \$1.5 million for future economic losses. They also gave him \$16 million for pain and suffering.

His wife, Norma, who quit her job as a AT&T customer service representative to care for him, received \$3 million for past and future lost consortium. Six of their children, who were minors at the time of the accident, each received \$1.5 million for lost consortium. “The whole lives were spent trying to keep him alive,” Uustal said.