

## **THE HERALD, November 21, 2002**

**“Car-Crash victim awarded \$50 million”**

**By: Jay Weaver**

Frederick Wilson had just gotten off a graveyard shift at CSX railroad on the morning of July 4, 1998.

As he drove home just after 6 a.m., Wilson was broadsided by a man who ran a blinking red light at a Northwest Miami Dade intersection. The accident left Wilson paralyzed.

On Wednesday, a state circuit court jury ordered the driver, Ronald Bottex, to pay more than \$50 million in damages to Wilson and his family. The verdict, one of the largest of its kind in Florida, will fall on Bottex and his car insurer. “Obviously, the full amount won’t be collected,” said Wilson’s attorney, John Uustal of [Schlesinger law firm] Fort Lauderdale. “But there is going to be some way to collect part of this judgment.”

Bottex’s attorney, Frederick Pasternack, declined to comment about the verdict. The jury reached it after a three-day trial before Circuit Judge Barbara Levenson, finding Bottex liable for Wilson’s injuries.

Wilson, 49, a father of eight, worked the overnight shift at CSX before the Fourth of July. Early that morning, he was returning home in his Chevrolet Silverado pickup along Northwest 27<sup>th</sup> Avenue. He passed through a blinking yellow light at 151<sup>st</sup> Street.

Bottex, 29, who had worked back-to-back shifts at Office Depot and Pizza Hut, was heading east in his Honda Civic along 151<sup>st</sup> Street.

His car lights were not on, though it was still dark outside, a witness testified at trial. He also blew through the blinking red light instead of stopping, the witness said. Bottex rammed into the driver’s side of Wilson’s truck. Bottex, of North Miami, suffered brain damage and was in a coma for three months. Wilson broke his neck, leaving him with no movement in his legs and partial movement in his arms. The family now lives in Plantation.

The jury awarded most of the judgment to Wilson for his medical costs, lost wages and pain and suffering. The rest went to his wife and six of their children.