

'We Weren't Going to Budge': How an East Hartford Lawyer Tripled a Settlement Offer After Client's Car Crash

Plaintiff's co-counsel William Wynne helped secure a \$100,000 settlement for his client, a retired IBM executive injured in a 2017 car wreck.

By **Robert Storace** | June 16, 2020 at 02:50 PM



Connecticut Superior Court Raymond E. Baldwin Courthouse in Middletown. Photo: Joe Mabel via Wikimedia Commons

Coupled with a defendant who was driving drunk and his plaintiff client, a retired IBM executive injured in a car wreck with the drunken driver, plaintiff co-counsel [William Wynne](#) knew he had a strong case.

Wynne said Tuesday he had no intention of accepting the defense offer to settle the case for \$32,000, and instead kept his eye on the \$100,000 policy limit of defendant driver Henry Adams.

"We weren't going to budge. It was either \$100,000 or go to trial," said Wynne, a trial attorney with the Adler Law Group in East Hartford.

Wynne said he invited the defense team to take his client's deposition, which "sealed our case."

[Larry Adler](#), owner of Adler Law Group, assisted Wynne on the case.

During deposition, plaintiff Ronald Bugai showed "that he was a great witness and would make a great witness at trial if it went that far," Wynne said. "He has an overall terrific personality and was able to show that he suffered from a significant injury but he was not someone who'd complain about the injury. He was able to live with the injury, but everyone knew he was in a great deal of pain."

Wynne continued: "Just him telling his story, letting our client tell his piece, won the case for us and enabled us to get the \$100,000 policy limit."

The case settled on June 8.

According to the Wynne and the [January 2019 lawsuit](#) filed in Middletown Superior Court, Adams was driving drunk when he drove through a stop sign on Brush Hill Road in Middletown in February 2017 and smashed into the passenger side of Bugai's Chevrolet Blazer.

"My client was going 40 miles per hour and felt the other car was traveling 30 to 40 miles per hour and ran the stop sign," Wynne said. "My client's vehicle spun around 180 degrees."

Police cited Adams with running a stop sign, and driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

Bugai, a 72-year-old Middletown resident, was wearing a seat belt and driving alone, Wynne said. Both cars were totally destroyed, Wynne said.

Bugai, his attorney said, needed left shoulder surgery to repair a rotator cuff tear. He also had injuries to his left hand and fingers and to his cervical spine, according to the lawsuit.

Bugai, Wynne said, incurred about \$32,000 in medical expenses. Today, Wynne said, Bugai has difficulty lifting and driving.

"He also has a limited range of motion in his left shoulder," the attorney said.

Representing Adams is Brian Smith, an attorney with Berchem Moses in Milford. Smith did not respond to a request for comment Tuesday.

In court pleadings, the defense said Bugai's negligence caused the accident in that he "failed to keep a proper lookout" and "was inattentive to his surroundings."

The next step in the case, Wynne said, is to litigate for payment through Bugai's own underinsured motorist policy, which stands at \$250,000. Considering Bugai already received \$100,000, Wynne said he'd seek \$150,000 for his client from the underinsured policy.