

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

News

DALLAS TRIAL TEAM WINS DEFENSE VERDICT ON BEHALF OF ELECTRICIAN IN WRONGFUL DEATH CASE

Newsbrief

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MDJ&W's Dallas trial team recently won an important defense verdict on behalf of an electrical service company in an electrocution wrongful death case that occurred at the home of Exxon/Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson. Congratulations to Dallas Managing Partner Mark Dyer and trial team members Alan Moore and Karen Meek. See *Ramirez v. Complete Landsculpture of Texas, L.P. and Denton Electric, Inc.*; No 11-12834, in the 193rd District Court of Dallas County, Texas.

The property had a large pond on it with an underwater electric pump. The pump malfunctioned and Mrs. Tillerson contacted Complete Landsculpture, who provided lawn care for the estate. Complete hired MDJ&W's client Denton Electric to confirm whether electricity was flowing properly through the system. Denton Electric sent a journeyman electrician out to confirm the pump was receiving power, which he determined it was. Before leaving, he asked Plaintiff if he wanted the system completely de-energized. Plaintiff asked that the system not be completely de-energized because they wanted to test the system after it was removed from the pond. The electrician turned off the pump in two different locations and verbally warned the plaintiff not to be in the water with the pump if it was energized.

After Denton Electric left, the plaintiff attempted to remove the pump with the help of two workers. His attempts failed so he called for a Bobcat with chains to pull out the pump. It is believed during that process, electrical wires to the pump became exposed. After the pump was partially removed from the water the plaintiff asked a worker to turn the pump on. That worker told Plaintiff that he should get out of the water before he energized the pump and then went to the house to turn on the pump. Plaintiff did not heed those warnings and was electrocuted. After the incident, it was learned that the original installer of the pump (not Denton Electric) failed to properly ground the pump and that a wire that provided electricity to the pump had been compromised and was exposed, allowing electricity to flow into the pond.

Plaintiff's demand was never less than \$1,000,000. The jury deliberated for 10 hours and found Complete Landsculpture 80% at fault, Plaintiff 20% at fault, and Denton Electric not negligent. Of note, the worker who flipped the switch that electrocuted the deceased married the deceased's wife six months later.