

Broward firm agrees to \$4 million settlement in crash

Herald Keys Bureau

Parkland firm Giannetti Contracting has agreed to pay a Marathon man \$4 million for his injuries during a deadly 1997 crash on the Overseas Highway, according to a settlement agreement.

James Downs and wife Migdalia Downs were heading south on U.S. 1 in Islamorada on Sept. 24, 1997, when a driver in a pick-up truck, later identified as Ricky Giannetti of Parkland, crossed the center line. The truck hit the Jones' car, which spun around, according to a Florida Highway Patrol report, and hit a Buick head on near the Islamorada Tennis Club, killing three Miami men: Norberto De Jesus Gisbert, Edelmiro Rodriguez and driver Antonio Valentin Reyes.

Gisbert's family also sued Giannetti Contracting and settled in October, said the Gisbert family attorney Robert Tilghman. Tilghman declined to divulge the amount of the settlement.

James Downs, who owned a tile company, recovered at Jackson Memorial Hospital in Miami for three months, said his lawyer Jon Friedland, of Daryl L. Merl P.A. and Associates. Downs has not worked since the accident and still suffers from heart damage and a head injury, Friedland said. His wife Migdalia is an assistant manager for Walgreens.

Giannetti Contracting did not admit to causing the accident, Friedland said. The company argued instead that a loose lug nut on Giannetti's Ford truck caused the driver to swerve into the highway's southbound lane. The company's attorney, Cecelia Aulick, did not return calls seeking comment.

Your Ad Here!

Copyright © 1999 The Miami Herald

Getting in touch with HERALDlink