

A \$30 million verdict: Simmons Hanly Conroy represents 65-year-old construction supervisor with mesothelioma against J-M Manufacturing

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LOS ANGELES – [Simmons Hanly Conroy](#), one of the nation's leading mesothelioma law firms, is pleased to announce a California jury has awarded \$30.2 million to Norris Morgan, 65, who was diagnosed with mesothelioma, a rare and aggressive cancer caused by exposure to asbestos. Morgan contracted mesothelioma after repeated exposure to asbestos-containing transite pipe sold by defendant J-M Manufacturing (J-MM) while working as a construction supervisor in southern California.

The compensatory verdict awarded Tuesday in Los Angeles Superior Court before Judge Maurice A. Leiter included \$15.2 million in damages. The jury awarded Morgan \$1 million in economic damages and \$13.2 million for pain and suffering. His wife, Lori Morgan, was awarded \$1 million for loss of consortium. The jury held J-MM 45 percent responsible for Morgan's mesothelioma diagnosis and split the remaining liability among several entities that also exposed Morgan to asbestos.

Jurors also found J-MM acted with malice and awarded punitive damages. According to evidence presented during trial, more than 700 articles and studies were published prior to 1964 showing asbestos caused cancer and death. Yet, despite knowing the existing danger and having access to a safe alternative, J-MM chose to use asbestos in its pipes. As a result, jurors awarded punitive damages Thursday totaling \$15 million during a separate punitive damages hearing.

Simmons attorneys [Scott Peebles](#) and [Robert Woodward](#) and shareholders [Tim Thompson](#) and [Benjamin Goldstein](#) represented Morgan and his wife in *Norris Morgan and Lori Morgan vs CBS Corporation, et al., Case No. BC695605* in Los Angeles Superior Court.

“After examining the evidence, the jury found J-MM made a calculated business decision to use asbestos, and Norris and his family are suffering for it,” said Peebles, who served as lead attorney during the trial. “Norris should have never been diagnosed with cancer because he should have never been exposed to asbestos. This result is fair and holds the defendant accountable for its actions.”

Morgan was born and raised in Los Angeles. He left college in the mid-1970s for construction jobs around San Luis Obispo and in Ventura, California. Over the next 20 years, Morgan was exposed to asbestos while supervising workers who cut and beveled the defendant’s transite pipe, which released airborne asbestos fibers into the surrounding work environment. Morgan was a bystander to the exposure and did not perform the work himself.

The jury found the transite pipe sold by J-MM was unreasonably dangerous and that Morgan’s exposure to the pipe caused his mesothelioma diagnosis. Evidence presented during trial showed that J-MM failed to adequately warn about the hazards of asbestos. As a result, Morgan was repeatedly exposed to asbestos without learning of its dangers.

Lori Morgan, who testified during trial, said she would give it all back to have her husband healthy again.

“While no amount of money can give my husband back his health, this result acknowledges the devastation our family has suffered,” she said. “I hope this result sends a clear message to companies about the consequences of using asbestos.”

The dangers of asbestos have been known since the early 1900s. Mesothelioma occurs when asbestos fibers become lodged in the lining of a person’s lungs. The cancer has a long latency period and typically takes decades to form. There is currently no cure.

“I battled and held on to have my day in court,” Norris said. “We are so appreciative of our team at Simmons Hanly Conroy.”

The verdict is the fourth asbestos verdict Simmons Hanly Conroy has won on behalf of its clients in the past 15 months. The trial lasted three weeks, and the jury deliberated for five hours before holding J-MM liable for Morgan’s mesothelioma. The couple currently resides in Washington state to be near family.

About Simmons Hanly Conroy, LLC

Simmons Hanly Conroy dedicates its legal practice to helping victims of mesothelioma. As one of the nation’s largest mass tort law firms, Simmons has represented thousands

of patients and families affected by mesothelioma throughout the country. Additionally, the firm's attorneys have been appointed to leadership in numerous national multidistrict litigations involving dangerous drugs, medical devices, prescription opioids, and consumer protection issues, including Vioxx, Yaz, Volkswagen Emissions and DePuy Pinnacle. Since 1999, the firm has pledged more than \$20 million to cancer research and has been a leading supporter of mesothelioma research and asbestos prevention. Read more at www.simmonsfirm.com.