
Hughes Hubbard & Reed

Hughes Hubbard Wins Defense Verdict for Reynolds, H&V in Wrongful Death Trial

News & Events

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Hughes Hubbard, working jointly with co-trial counsel, won a defense jury verdict for R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company (Reynolds) and Hollingsworth & Vose Company (H&V) in a Kent filter wrongful death case.

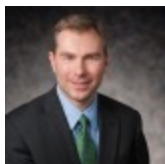
A Superior Court jury in Middlesex County, New Jersey rendered a complete defense verdict on Aug. 15 for Reynolds, H&V and co-defendant Whittaker Clark & Daniels, a former talc supplier. This is the first Kent filter verdict since Reynolds acquired Lorillard Tobacco Company in June 2015, and the latest impressive result in the litigation secured by HHR since it assumed control of the Kent filter cases in January 2012.

Between March 1952 and May 1956, P. Lorillard Company manufactured, marketed and sold Kent cigarettes with an asbestos-containing filter. During that time, H&V supplied Lorillard with the filter media used in the Kent cigarette filters. At trial, Valerie Panzarella claimed that her father's mesothelioma and resulting death were caused by smoking Kent cigarettes with the asbestos-containing filter and from exposure to asbestos-containing talc while working at a factory that manufactured cosmetic products.

The jury agreed with Reynolds and found that Panzarella did not prove by a preponderance of evidence her failure-to-warn or design defect claims against with regard to Kent cigarettes. "This verdict is a major victory against an experienced and aggressive counsel in a particularly plaintiff-friendly jurisdiction," said Jim Berger, who led the Hughes Hubbard team.

The HHR team, which represented H&V at trial, included Suzanne Teeven, Elizabeth Raines, Kathy Jeanetta, Sally Merriam, Mike Mitchell and Kari Jones. Ricardo Cedillo of Davis, Cedillo & Mendoza, was trial counsel for Reynolds; and Steve DeFeo of Brown & Connery was co-counsel for both defendants.

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