

Texas Woman Sues Princess Cruise Lines for Negligence in Husband's Coronavirus Death

Rusty Hardin & Associates suit: Cruise line knew of danger, failed to warn and delayed medical care

LOS ANGELES – A Texas woman is suing Princess Cruise Lines for knowingly exposing her and her husband to the new coronavirus and for preventing her husband from leaving the ship while his health deteriorated, leading him to ultimately die alone days later in a California hospital.

On Feb. 21, Susan Dorety and her husband Michael, a retired firefighter, of Crowley, Texas, boarded the Grand Princess cruise ship in San Francisco to celebrate their 40th anniversary. Little did they know that some passengers who had COVID-19 symptoms had just disembarked while more than 60 others were allowed to remain on-board after they had been exposed to the virus.

Four days after the Doretys boarded, Princess Cruise Lines emailed the previous passengers who were no longer on the ship, alerting them that they had been exposed to the dangerous virus. But there was no warning to the new passengers including the Doretys.

“It is shocking to me that a cruise line that had just discharged coronavirus-infected passengers took on board a new group of passengers to then mingle with others who had been exposed. Princess had notice of the dangers, the Doretys did not,” said Rusty Hardin of Rusty Hardin & Associates of Houston, who represents Mrs. Dorety.

In addition, when a crew member with COVID-19 symptoms left the Grand Princess in Hawaii, there still was no alert to passengers. Mrs. Dorety says she and her husband would have disembarked there had they known about the risks to their health.

“The behavior of Princess Cruise Lines is all the more outrageous because just a few weeks earlier, one of their ships had a coronavirus outbreak infecting 700 people while docked in Japan,” said Mr. Hardin. “This cruise line company put money ahead of its passengers’ well-being, and it cost Michael Dorety his life.”

After two weeks on the cruise, passengers were placed in quarantine off the California coast, and Mr. Dorety fell ill. Mrs. Dorety called the ship’s emergency line multiple times, but no one responded. Her husband became weak and was shivering and feverish as his health deteriorated. A ship’s doctor came at last, giving him Tylenol and Tamiflu, but the couple was not advised until later that they could leave the ship for medical treatment.

Mr. Dorety died in an Oakland hospital days later with no family by his side. Mrs. Dorety, meanwhile, also contracted Covid-19.

The lawsuit, filed April 14, seeks damages for negligence, gross negligence and for other unlawful acts. Other members of the Rusty Hardin & Associates team are Ryan Higgins, Daniel Dutko and Leah Graham. Serving as local counsel in California are Gerald Singleton and J. Ross Peabody of the Singleton Law Firm of San Diego. The lawsuit is *Susan Dorety individually and on behalf of the estate of Michael Dorety vs. Princess Cruise Lines, Ltd.*, Case No. 2:20-cv-02458, in the Central District of U.S. District Court of California.

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Note: Photos of Michael Dorety and court documents are available by request.

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