

Ward, Smith & Hill Helps Client Win \$9.25 Million East Texas Patent Verdict

Attorneys Wesley Hill of Longview, Texas-based Ward, Smith & Hill, PLLC, and Christopher Banys of Palo Alto, California-based Banys, P.C., have won a \$9.25 million patent infringement verdict on behalf of the surviving family members of Dallas inventor Charles Freeny Jr.

Hill and Banys represented Freeny's three adult sons, Brian, James and Charles III, in the trial heard in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas in Marshall. The lawsuit against El Dorado, Arkansas-based Murphy USA Inc. accused the company of infringing two patents owned by the three brothers that cover technology used in fuel pricing systems, U.S. Patent No. 6,076,071 and No. 6,513,016 (both titled "automated synchronous product pricing and advertising system").

"We are very thankful the jury recognized Murphy USA's wrongful use of the Freenys' intellectual property," says Hill. "This was a hard fought case that ended with the correct decision."

Jurors appearing before Judge Roy Payne returned the verdict on June 11 following approximately 3.5 hours of deliberations. The \$9.25 million awarded to the Freeny brothers followed the jury's finding that the four claims of the contested patents were valid and that Murphy USA had infringed all four of the claims. The case is *Charles C. Freeny, III, et al. v. Murphy USA, Inc.*, No. 2:13-CV-791.

Hill, a veteran of East Texas courts, has successfully tried numerous cases to verdict, including more than a dozen patent infringement trials. His trial expertise has helped him earn

selection to the annual *Texas Rising Stars* list of the state's top young lawyers since 2011 and membership in the American Board of Trial Advocates.

Longview, Texas-based Ward, Smith & Hill, PLLC, has tried more than 350 cases to verdict, earning a national reputation in high-stakes claims involving complex commercial litigation, intellectual property law, oil and gas matters, bad faith insurance claims, and serious personal injury claims. The firm frequently assists lawyers nationwide in complex cases before Texas juries.