

‘King of Torts’ Joe Jamail Dies at Age 90



Summary: *Despite not being the most liked person by some, Joe Jamail was a highly successful and regarded attorney in the tort business.*

Texas billionaire and **richest practicing lawyer Joe Jamail** passed away at the age of 90. Jamail became the richest practicing lawyer in the United States from winning the jury verdicts of civil lawsuits. One such case was between Pennzoil Co. and Texaco Inc during the 1980s that resulted in a \$10.5 billion award for Pennzoil.

Spokesman for the **University of Texas law school in Austin**, Christopher Roberts, confirmed the news of Jamail’s death as complications from pneumonia. Jamail was an alumnus and big supporter of the law school.

The “King of Torts” won his nickname because of his infamous victories against large corporations. He served as the lead counsel on over 200 personal-injury cases that resulted in settlements or verdicts at a minimum of \$1 million for his clients. The Pennzoil vs. Texaco case that dealt with the purchase of Getty Oil Co. helped make Jamail the most sought-after lawyer during his fifty years in practice.

Pennzoil had sued Texaco for \$15 billion in damages; Texaco was the third-largest U.S. oil company at the time. Pennzoil claimed that Texaco’s deal to buy Getty in 1984 interfered with a former agreement. A jury sided with Pennzoil in 1985 and was settled for \$3 billion. Jamail’s law firm received \$345 million in fees from the case.

It is estimated that Jamail’s net worth was around \$1.65 billion. He was called the country’s richest practicing lawyer by the American Bar Association Journal in 2010. Other cases he worked on include a Remington 600 rifle product recall, prescription drug Parlodel recall, and a Honda all-terrain three-wheel vehicle recall.

His courtroom language was sometimes described as “vulgar”, he had a knack for winning over juries by relating human elements of a case and selecting the right mix of jurors. Richard Miller, the legal counsel for Texaco during the Pennzoil dispute said of Jamail, “He’s a shrewd person about weaknesses of people. He understands human frailty, and that’s a big part of his success; nobody can deny that.”

Source: https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/joe-jamail-texas-legal-titan-dubbed-king-of-torts-dies-at-90/2015/12/23/ae5d3206-a99e-11e5-9b92-dea7cd4b1a4d_story.html

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