

City of Miami Approves \$975,000 Payout to Complete \$1.125 Million Settlement for Family of Travis McNeil

February 27, 2015, MIAMI – Yesterday the City of Miami Commissioners approved a \$975,000 payment to the Estate of Travis McNeil to settle a civil rights case stemming from McNeil’s fatal 2011 shooting by a Miami police officer. Mr. McNeil’s Estate had already reached a \$150,000 settlement with federal agencies who were also participating in the operation that resulted in his death, for a total settlement of \$1.125 million. The Estate is represented by Miami attorneys Randall C. Berg, Jr. and Dante Trevisani of the civil rights nonprofit Florida Justice Institute, as well as local civil rights attorney Raymond Taseff.

“Mr. McNeil’s death was tragic and preventable, and it was not an isolated incident,” said attorney Ray Taseff. “Hopefully this settlement is one step toward transforming the Miami police department so that it can better serve the people of Miami.” Mr. McNeil is survived by a son, now 14, and a daughter, now 7.

Mr. McNeil and his cousin Kareem Williams were pulled over in a traffic stop initiated by a joint task force comprised of Miami police and federal agents. The officers did not suspect that Mr. McNeil was armed or a member of a gang; he had at most committed a traffic violation. Yet rather than complete a typical traffic stop, three law enforcement vehicles converged on Mr. McNeil’s car and attempted to box him in. City of Miami officer Reynaldo Goyos approached the car with his gun drawn, and eventually fired three shots, killing McNeil and wounding Williams. Both occupants were unarmed and no contraband was found in the car.

The City later fired Goyos for improperly using deadly force. Goyos appealed, and an arbitrator reversed the firing and reinstated Goyos.

“Nothing can bring Travis back, but hopefully this kind of settlement sends a message that the Miami Police Department needs to change,” said attorney Dante Trevisani.

Mr. McNeil’s Estate sued the City of Miami and the United States government for its participation in the task force. One of the civil rights claims against the City alleged that the police had engaged in a pattern and practice of excessive force during the years leading up to the McNeil shooting.

The United States Department of Justice began a comprehensive investigation into Miami police practices in 2011 after the McNeil shooting, as he was the seventh African-American to be shot by the Miami police in a short period of time. In July 2013, the DOJ completed its report, finding that the Miami police had engaged in a pattern and practice of deadly force with respect to firearms. The DOJ is currently in talks with the City over how to overhaul police practices.

The case is *Graves v. City of Miami*, Case No. 13-CV-22501-KMM in the Southern District of Florida. For more information, please contact Ray Taseff at raytaseffpa@gmail.com or 305-586-4502; or Dante Trevisani at dtrevisani@floridajusticeinstitute.org or 305-358-2081. END