



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Trial Attorney Willie Gary and Team Awarded Over \$16 Million in Compensatory Damages and \$23 Billion Dollars in Punitive Damages Against Big Tobacco (RJ Reynolds) as a Result of Client's Smoking Related Death**

(Pensacola, Florida) July 18, 2014 – Trial attorney Willie Gary, along with his law partner Donald Watson, of the Florida-based law firm of Gary, Williams, Parenti, & Watson, P.L.L.C., Chris Chestnut of the Chestnut Firm in Atlanta, Georgia and Howard Acosta of St. Petersburg, Florida were awarded over \$16 million in compensatory damages and \$23 billion in punitive damages on behalf of their client Cynthia Robinson. Throughout the course of a four-week trial, Gary and team proved that RJ Reynolds was negligent in informing consumers of the dangers of tobacco and therefore, caused the unnecessary and untimely demise of Michael Johnson, Sr. Johnson contracted lung cancer as a direct and proximate result of smoking cigarettes. Johnson became addicted to cigarettes and was unable to quit smoking despite numerous attempts.

After roughly 15 hours of deliberations, the Jury returned a verdict, late Friday evening, in favor of Gary's client for over \$16 million dollars in compensatory damages, and a landmark \$23 billion in punitive damages. The Jury determined that RJ Reynolds was negligent and should have done a better job at informing consumers about the dangers of smoking and the physical dependency caused by nicotine.

“RJ Reynolds took a calculated risk by manufacturing cigarettes and selling them to consumers without properly informing them of the hazards,” commented Willie Gary. “As a result of their negligence, my client's husband suffered from lung cancer and eventually lost his life. There is no amount of money that will ever be able to replace her husband or her quality of life. We hope that this verdict will send a message to RJ Reynolds and other big tobacco companies that will force them to stop putting the lives of innocent people in jeopardy,” stated Gary.



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Gary is no stranger to seeking justice. Gary and his legal team are known for taking on some of the nation's most powerful corporate giants, including the funeral industry. In 1995, a jury awarded Gary and his legal team a record-breaking, half-billion dollars against one of the world's largest funeral chains, The Loewen Group. In addition, Gary is noted for winning a \$240 million jury verdict in Orange County against the Walt Disney Corporation for his clients who alleged that Disney stole their idea for a sports theme park. In 2001, a jury awarded Gary a \$139.6 million verdict for the Maris Distributing Company against Anheuser Busch.

**PHOTO CAPTION: Cynthia Robinson and her legal team celebrate the victory. (Left to Right): Attorney Donald Watson, Attorney Chris Chestnut, Cynthia Robinson, Attorney Willie Gary, Attorney Howard Acosta and Paulette Madsen**

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