

I write this only because many of you knew John well but may not have known about this aspect of his life, and it's something that I really respected and admired him for. As you probably know, part of John's legal work - at least in the 1980s, was workers' comp. At that time, I was safety director for a large bridge and highway contractor. (They built Spaghetti Junction, for example.) One day I went to a workers' comp hearing, and lo and behold, there was John representing an injured employee. The judge ruled and the employee got exactly what the law allowed and my company's insurance company had paid, except that he lost 30% to John, because that was the way the system was designed to compensate the lawyers. Afterward John talked to me and told me that this guy had insisted on going to court even after John had explained that this would be the outcome - including the 30%. John told me that he counseled the majority of injured employees to whom he talked not to go to court because their cases were straightforward, and they would lose 30% of their compensation. (And I suspect they could have used those 30% back then.) Later I talked to a couple of employees who had talked to John after injuries, and they confirmed this. In later safety meetings, I told employees if they ever got hurt on the job and felt like they were not being treated fairly, to call John Sweet, because I knew he would treat them fairly, and not take advantage of them. John, rest in peace.

Thank you,
Steve Hays