

The Florida Times-Union

JACKSONVILLE.COM

September 30, 2015

Jacksonville architecture firm settles with family for \$1 million after fatal mailman crash in 2007

A lawsuit against a Jacksonville architecture firm was settled for \$1 million on behalf of a man who was killed in a crash while driving a mail truck in a construction zone in Osceola County in 2007, according to court records.

Jhurel P. Villanueva, 35, was hit in his U.S. Postal Service truck by a vehicle trying to pass him as he was trying to turn left from County Road 15 onto Bullis Road, according to the lawsuit.

The firm — Reynolds Smith & Hills — received a contract for the construction project in 1999 and had meetings to discuss issues the public might have with the construction area, according to court records.

The public expressed concerns with a dangerous intersection on Bullis, so the firm agreed to post signs indicating a no-passing zone to warn drivers about the left turn, according to court records. The signs were posted, but at the wrong intersection of Bullis and County Road 15.

A judge ruled the firm was not responsible once the plans were submitted to Osceola County and the project was started by the county's engineers, but the ruling was reversed on an appeal and the firm later settled with Villanueva's family, according to court records.

The county also settled for \$200,000.