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JURY FINDS TEXAS LAW FIRM UNLAWFULLY SOLICITED FAMILIES OF DEADLY CHATTANOOGA SCHOOL BUS CRASH

Witherspoon Law Group and its associates ordered to pay \$96,000

Nashville- A Chattanooga jury unanimously found a Texas law firm, its owner, and agents liable for consumer protection violations and the unauthorized practice of law arising out of their actions in soliciting families of the fatal 2016 school bus crash in Chattanooga.

On November 12, 2021, [the jury found](#) in favor of the State and against the Witherspoon Law Group, owner Nuru Witherspoon, and law firm representatives Glenn Smith and Alphonso McClendon.

Both Mr. Smith and Mr. McClendon, who are not licensed attorneys, solicited parents whose children had died in accidents. Mr. McClendon also falsely held himself out as a lawyer.

Mr. Witherspoon was found responsible for the conduct of his firm's representatives.

The defendants were also found to have violated the Tennessee Consumer Protection Act for causing confusion about their services, their association with lenders, and for contacting consumers at a funeral home while they were making final arrangements for their children.

For these violations, the jury ordered civil penalties against the defendants:

- \$90,000 for the unauthorized practice of law
- \$6,000 for violations of Tennessee Consumer Protection Act

“These individuals—who did not even live or work in Tennessee—preyed upon victim’s families while in the darkest days of their grief,” said General Slatery. “We appreciate the jury’s unanimous decision in this matter and our team of attorneys who worked to hold the defendants accountable for the last five years. This should send a message: misrepresenting yourself and attempting to practice law when you are not licensed here, will not be tolerated. From the outset we were determined to take this to trial. We will do the same thing again if confronted with this type of behavior.”

The State has also filed a motion for permanent injunction and a motion for attorney’s fees.