

MISSOURI
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Plaintiff Claimed Homeowner Negligent In Fatal Fire

Defendant's Verdict



KUENZEL

The plaintiffs were the relatives of two men who were killed in a house fire. They sued the woman who owned the house.

The fire happened on Nov. 20, 1996 at approxi-

mately 1:15 a.m. Four people were killed in the fire. The homeowner survived.

The plaintiffs' expert argued that the fire occurred because the woman stored flammable materials, including newspaper, magazines and starter logs, too close to a wood-burning stove.

The defendant argued that heat from the stove could not have ignited combustibles 18 inches to 20 inches away from the stove, that the origin of the fire was unknown, and that there were at least 14 other possible sources of ignition. She also contended she was not the last per-

V S VERDICTS & SETTLEMENTS

son to put wood in the stove.

Type of Action: Negligence

Type of Injuries: Death

Court/Case Number/Date:
Franklin County Circuit
Court/CV197-644CC/Oct. 22,
1999

Caption: Fowler, et al. v. Beck

Judge, Jury, or ADR: Jury

Name of Judge: Jeff W.
Schaeperkoetter

Special Damages Claimed:
\$13,000 funeral expense

Verdict or Settlement: Defen-
dant's verdict

Allocation of Fault: N/A

Last Offer: None

Last Demand: \$90,000

Attorney for Defendant: Steven
P. Kuenzel, Washington

Insurance Carrier: American

Family Mutual Insurance Co.

Plaintiffs' Expert: Ronald Green-
meyer, St. Louis (fire cause and
origin)

Defendant's Expert: Roger Win-
dle, Cuba (fire cause and origin)



The plaintiff claimed the wood stove ignited nearby combustibles.