

VERDICTS & SETTLEMENTS

\$2.055M settlement SE Missouri county settles after man dies in jailhouse

WRONGFUL DEATH

- **Venue:** U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Missouri
- **Case Number/Date:** 1: 18-cv-00269/ March 15, 2022
- **Judge:** Abbie Crites-Leoni
- **Insurers:** Missouri Public Entity Risk Management Fund, Savers Property & Casualty Insurance Company
- **Caption:** Quinta Sanders v. Mississippi County, Cory Hutcheson, Sally Yanez Ryan Hill, Joe Ross, Josh Maldonado, Decota McGlothlin and Faith Altamirano
- **Plaintiff's Attorneys:** Samuel M. Wendt, Wendt Law Firm, Kansas City, Michael Hoskins, Law Office of Michael G. Hoskins, Nashville, Tennessee
- **Defendants' Attorneys:** Robert Plunkert, Pitzer Snodgrass, St. Louis, Albert Spradling, Spradling & Spradling, Cape Girardeau

BY SCOTT LAUCK

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A FEDERAL JUDGE approved a settlement of more than \$2 million for the family of a man who died in a southeastern Missouri jail cell.

The settlement with Mississippi County and seven of its officials is in addition to a \$500,000 settle-

ment reached last year with another municipality, bringing the total recovery for Tory Sanders' survivors to \$2.555 million.

Sanders, a 28-year-old Black man, ended up in Charleston in May 2017 after getting lost while driving from his home in Nashville to Memphis. He told police officers that he needed a mental evaluation. They transported Sanders to the Mississippi County Detention Center, rather than to a hospital emergency room.

Although a counselor determined he was not a danger to himself or others, Sanders continued to be held in a cell, where he became increasingly aggravated and belligerent through the day. While awaiting a court order to determine if Sanders should be placed under a 96-hour civil commitment, jail officials increasingly used force against him, including shocking him multiple times with a Taser and pepper-spraying him in his cell, according to a federal

lawsuit filed in 2018 by Sanders' mother, Quinta Sanders.

Ultimately, 10 officers rushed into his cell and started an altercation that ended with former Mississippi County Sheriff Cory Hutcheson pressing his knee to Tory Sanders' neck until Sanders passed out, the suit alleged. The suit also alleged that the officers failed to immediately take measures to save Sanders' life. He was pronounced dead at a local hospital.

"The jailers and officers can offer no valid reason for entering Tory's room and provoking this violent and fatal encounter" Sam Wendt of the Wendt Law Firm in Kansas City said in a statement. "The multiple uses of force in this case were not objectively reasonable and violated Tory's constitutional rights."

The Mississippi County defendants did not admit fault in the settlement, which Judge Abbie Crites-Leoni approved on March 15. **MO**