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St. Louis Park Employee Contracts Lymphoma, Wins Lawsuit Blaming Roundup

A former employee of St. Louis's Department of Parks' Forestry Division won a settlement from Bayer earlier this year from a lawsuit connecting his cancer to his exposure to Roundup while working for the City agency. The plaintiff, Earl Neal, brought one of over 100,000 similar cases in which people successfully sued Bayer, which bought Monsanto in 2018, contending that their illness was caused by spraying the Roundup herbicide, Monsanto's flagship product. Over 130,000 lawsuits over the Roundup-cancer connection have been filed against Bayer/Monsanto in the USA.

In a recent interview with the St. Louis No Spray Coalition, Mr. Neal said he worked for the Forestry Division as a seasonal worker for a few years in the late 1990's – early 2000's. The crew he worked with used Roundup regularly. “The safety talk they had with us was about using the equipment, it wasn't about using the herbicide.” The crew was led to believe that the weedkiller was safe to use and they were given no Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). “The only [safety] equipment they issued us were utility gloves”, not rubber gloves. Mr. Neal said. They often worked in T-shirts, and he said he got sprayed on unprotected parts of his body “all the time.”

In 2005, Mr. Neal had a ruptured gall bladder and was rushed to a hospital. Bloodwork done during this time revealed he had Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia (CLL). “I thought I was just unlucky,” Mr. Neal said, until he saw a TV ad connecting Roundup use to Non-Hodgkin Lymphoma (NHL) and CLL. “When I saw CLL listed I thought about all the Roundup we used to worked with and that's when I made the connection.” Mr. Neal said. He contacted the law firm in the ad, Weitz & Luxenberg P.C . He filed the lawsuit in Sept. 2017. Since part of the settlement include a non-disclosure clause, the amount of money awarded was not made public.

The International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and the State of California have classified Roundup as a “probable carcinogen.” Many independent scientists have confirmed the Roundup-NHL/CLL connection. Roundup is one of the most widely used pesticides on farms, residential properties, parks and public spaces. Over 130 cities in North America (but NOT St. Louis City or County) have enacted No Spray ordinances which restrict or *prohibit* the use of pesticides in parks and public space. St. Louis No Spray Coalition activist Barbara Chicherio insists, “We need this legislation in St. Louis City and County to protect the health of employees and park visitors. We can't afford to wait until more come down with cancer.”

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