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Jury orders USAA to pay \$1.7 million to Tampa firefighter.

October 19, 2010 – TAMPA, FL – A Hillsborough County jury has ordered USAA to pay \$1.7 million to Jim Favata, a 27-year veteran firefighter from Tampa. Favata's leg was seriously injured when a '94 Cadillac struck his motorcycle while traveling north on Route 579 in July of 2008.

USAA attempted to deny Favata of full insurance money because he was riding the motor bike with his dog Gino, a 20 lbs. Jack Russell terrier who was unhurt in the accident. The insurance company claimed the dog caused the accident by creating a distraction. The jury disagreed with the insurance company and found Favata's damages to be \$2.1 million; however, the assignment of comparative negligence reduced the award to \$1.7 million.

"We proved the driver of the Cadillac was the one clearly negligent, not my client," said attorney Anthony T. Martino of Tampa-based Clark & Martino P.A., who successfully represented Favata, adding: "The jury agreed the dog was not to blame."

The dog Gino is an experienced traveller. He rides frequently with the veteran firefighter on a custom-built platform.

Mr. Martino and Mr. Favata are available for additional comment regarding the verdict and case details.

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