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Crane Operator Settles for \$5 million in Galveston Dock Case

Galveston -- A crane operator working on an offshore rig in drydock settled his suit for \$5 million in Galveston against his employer and the owner of the rig, which was involved in a serious accident which occurred when the crane toppled.

Warren Dupre, 55, of Eunice, La., worked for TODCO, a Houston company now owned by Hercules Offshore Corp., in November 2006. He was a crane operator on board the jack-up rig THE 153, which was at Gulf Coast Copper Facility drydock for repairs. When Dupre attempted to lower the boom of the crane to pickup equipment, the crane collapsed and broke from the pedestal which was connected with bolts that had deteriorated.

Dupre remained in the cab of the crane, falling 30 feet to the deck. He suffered a hip and pelvic fracture, plus a closed head injury. He has not been able to return to work, according to his attorneys Richard Mithoff and Janie Jordan. He was treated initially at UTMB, but then transferred to a medical facility in Lafayette.

After four days of testimony in state District Judge Wayne Mallia's court, the two sides settled the case Monday.

Defendants TODCO Management and Hercules Offshore Inc. as well as Wadleigh Industries, which does business as Offshore Equipment Solutions, claimed that the crane toppled because Dupre's handling of the equipment. But Mithoff said experts testified in the trial that the nuts and bolts assembly on the crane were improperly inspected and repaired, and therefore, failed.

"The family is relieved to finally get this case behind them," Mithoff said.

Also named as plaintiffs in the case were Dupre's wife Jacqueline and two young daughters.