

Bullivant attorney Norman Ronneberg continues wins for maritime industry

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Bullivant Houser Bailey is pleased to report that veteran trial attorney **Norman Ronneberg** has just achieved his second major litigation victory in three months. Norman practices maritime and insurance law in Bullivant's San Francisco office.

Most recently, Norman directly represented a British-owned ship repair facility in a multi-party maritime product defect suit in San Francisco Superior Court. Plaintiff was seeking damages in excess of \$2.5 million from our client. After 16 days of a projected 30 day jury trial, Norman successfully argued that a non-suit (i.e. an immediate judgment in favor of his client at the close of Plaintiff's case) should be rendered. The non-suit was ultimately based on the trial court's determination, after all of Plaintiff's evidence had been presented, that Plaintiff had not been able to prove legal causation against Bullivant's client. The non-suit not only triggered the speedy dismissal of all causes of action against the client, but also resulted in major savings of litigation costs and fees. Bullivant's client would now not need to participate in the remaining 14 days of trial, incur expert witness expenditures, additional attorneys' fees, etc.

Earlier in the trial, Norman used maritime law's "reverse Erie" doctrine to convince the California state court judge to apply federal maritime law principles (to the benefit of our client) in a common law suit brought by Plaintiff. The "unexpected" applicability of maritime law forced Plaintiff and the other litigants to re-consider their trial strategies, and to concentrate their fire on defendants who had previously settled out of the lawsuit. Norman used a similar "reverse Erie" tactic three months ago when Bullivant successfully defended a ship owner against charges that vessel negligence had caused damages in excess of \$1 million to a submarine cable.

For further information about the use of admiralty's "Reverse Erie" principles in state courts, please contact Norman directly at 415-352-2728.