

Settlement reached in suit over death

A \$500,000 settlement was reached Tuesday in a lawsuit in connection with the death of a man who died after a crane fell and crushed him at Bender Shipbuilding & Repair Co.

The trial had entered its second day Tuesday in Mobile County Circuit Court before Judge Michael Zoghby when the lawsuit was settled.

Steve Stuart, 31, of Moss Point, Miss., died on April 28, 1987, while working at Bender's. His widow, Gail Stuart, sued the shipbuilding company, alleging they provided an unsafe place for Stuart to work.

Richard Bounds, one of Mrs. Stuart's attorneys, said Stuart, a scrap metal dealer, had received a contract from the government to cut up two cranes that had been removed from a U.S. Navy ship. Bounds and Robert Cunningham represented Mrs. Stuart.

"He went on Bender's for that purpose and while engaged in the project, a top portion of the crane fell on top of him and crushed him to death," Bounds said.

Bounds said they contended Bender "failed to furnish Stuart with a safe place to work and with safe equipment and tools."

He said Bender agreed to lay the cranes on their sides so he could cut the cranes without having to stand them up, but Bender failed to place the cranes on their sides. Bounds said the cranes were easier to cut if they were on their sides.

When Stuart cut the top of the crane, which stood about 25 feet high, the top fell and crushed him.