

Attorneys Wayne Tartline and Ward Pankowski Obtain Defense Verdict In Habersham County House Fire Trial

By Wayne Tartline October 26, 2023

On October 25, 2023, Wayne Tartline and Ward Pankowski obtained a defense verdict for their client in the Habersham County State Court in Clarkesville, Georgia. The homeowner plaintiffs sued their long time HVAC contractor after a fire engulfed their home in November of 2017. Despite that the HVAC contractor had not done any work at the home in the approximately eighteen (18) months prior to the fire, the plaintiffs claimed that their work had caused the fire. Plaintiffs' expert electrical engineer quickly concluded that the fire was electrical in nature and was caused by poor workmanship by the defendant HVAC contractor.

Wayne and Ward were able to show the jury that Plaintiffs and their experts failed to conduct a complete investigation and failed to consider several other probable causes of the fire. In fact, the evidence at trial showed that it was apparent that the plaintiffs' own dogs likely had chewed wires which may have led to the blaze.

Plaintiffs were seeking damages in the amount of \$284,000.00 for damage to the home, its contents and their living expenses while they were displaced. The defense verdict not only saved Wayne's client from a large judgment, but also allows this family-owned HVAC business to continue its sterling reputation in the area for providing superior professional HVAC services.