



United Support & Memorial for Workplace Fatalities

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Our father, Ray Gonzalez, died on September 2, 2004, in a work-related incident. He and two other coworkers were on a scaffold, working on a water pump, when the seal on the pump ruptured, and all three of them were severely burned. My father Ray had second and third-degree burns to eighty percent his body. His coworker Maurice had second and third-degree burns to ninety percent of his body and Robert Kemp had burns to forty percent of his body.

The next day after the incident, Maurice died. However, my father spent two and a half months in the hospital trying to fight for his life, before he died. Robert Kemp, thankfully was able to go home to his family, while we stayed in the hospital watching my father suffer. My mother spent her 35th wedding anniversary in the hospital.

My father, Mr. Moore, and Mr. Kemp, had a combined 70-plus years of experience among them.

OSHA did investigate our father's incident and cited his employer \$109,500 for seven "serious" violations and one "willful" violation. The willful violation was for failure to control hazardous energy. After my father's incident, the Houston south area OSHA director called my father's incident "a tragic loss of life that could have been avoided, if OSHA standards had been followed."

A survey of workers was done at the BP Texas City refinery to look into the cause of accidents there. The employees cited "pressure for production" as the cause of most accidents at Texas City.

On March 23, 2005 the BP Texas City refinery had a massive explosion that killed 15 contractors and injured over 170 people. More reports were issued. James Baker was commissioned to lead an investigation into the incident, and it found that BP's safety program focused on slips and falls rather than the types of hazards associated with catastrophic incidents.

The chemical safety board said that “pressure for production” was the main cause of the accident at Texas City.

My father’s employer had over 22 worker fatalities in 5 years.

Words cannot express the impact that this has had on our family.

Jennifer: “It’s taken me a good five years just to be able to say ‘I lost my father.’ All three of my sisters graduated from college without him there – and my youngest daughter will never get to know her grandfather. My youngest sister, who was only 20 at the time of his death, will not have him there to walk her down the aisle at her upcoming wedding.”

This is our life now – all because of a willful violation with \$102,500 fine for a company that had a net income \$15.7 billion in 2004.

OSHA’s regulations do not kill jobs; they keep jobs from killing workers. This is the importance of our safety regulations, to make sure that mothers, fathers, sisters, brothers, sons and husbands come home to their families at the end of the end of their work day.