NEWS RELEASES

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Kansas Bar Association Honors Husch Blackwell Lawyers with Pro Bono Award

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The Kansas Bar Association has selected Husch Blackwell's Larry McMullen, Michael Raupp, and Christina Pyle as recipients of the 2018 Kansas Bar Association Pro Bono Award for their representation of the family of a deceased U.S. veteran in a wrongful death action against the U.S. government.

In June 2015, Chief District Judge Julie Robinson appointed Husch Blackwell to represent the family of Corporal William Draughon pro bono after the family filed a *pro se* complaint under the Federal Tort Claims Act, alleging that the Veterans Health Administration (VA) was negligent in treating their son for severe post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) after his honorable discharge from the military.

After defeating an early motion to dismiss, the Husch Blackwell team dug into the medical records, deposed healthcare professionals, and worked with expert witnesses to construct the case against VA. After successfully defeating the government's motion for summary judgment and motion to exclude expert testimony, the case proceeded to trial in January 2018, where ultimately Judge Robinson determined that the VA departed from its standard of care in a manner that "directly contributed to…William's death by suicide" by removing Cpl. Draughon from a list of patients at high-risk for suicide without an adequate medical rationale or proper administrative oversight. Judge Robinson also found that "the VA's myriad breaches of the standard of care that applied to William's follow-up treatment" after discharge from a VA treatment program "directly contributed to cause his death."

The award will be presented at the Kansas Bar Association's annual awards luncheon on June 15, 2018.

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