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## Heard, Robins, Cloud & Lubel, LLP

### Big Suits - Rupp et al. v. Sulzer Orthopedics

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**Source: The American Lawyer By Andrew Longstreth**

Sulzer Orthopedics, Inc., facing more than 1,500 suits across the country stemming from its defective hip implants, has been hit with its first verdict. In August a Corpus Christi, Texas, jury awarded \$15.5 million to three local women who received the faulty implants.

In December 2000, Sulzer Orthopedics, an Austin, Texas based subsidiary of Switzerland's Sulzer Medica Ltd., recalled thousands of its hip implants after receiving complaints. An inspection revealed a lubricant residue that in some cases prevented the implant from attaching to the bone. As of late September, 2,530 corrective surgeries had been performed, according to Sulzer.

FOR PLAINTIFFS NAOMI BONORDEN, HELEN RUPP, AND LILLIAN SALLINGER (CORPUS CHRISTI, TEXAS) WATTS & HEARD (CORPUS CHRISTI): Denman Heard, Mikal Watts, and associate Kevin Liles. The plaintiffs chose the firm because of its reputation in personal-injury cases.  
HILL & PARKER (HOUSTON): John Graham Hill, Charles Parker, and associate Hector Canales. Hill & Parker was asked to join the case by Watts & Heard. The two firms have worked together in the past.

FOR SULZER ORTHOPEDICS, INC. (AUSTIN)

IN-HOUSE: Group vice president, general counsel, and secretary David Wise and assistant general counsel Brian Devine.

CROSBY, HEAFEY, ROACH & MAY (OAKLAND): Howard Janssen and Ginger Heyman. Sulzer chose Crosby oil the strength of its reputation in product liability cases.

BARGER, HERMANSEN, McKIBBEN & VILLARREAL (CORPUS CHRISTI): Darrell Barger, David Green, and associate David Jones.

#### OUTLOOK

At press time Sulzer was filing posttrial motions in preparation for an appeal.