

[Stephen Anderson, et al. v. BorgWarner Morse Tec Inc., et al; 2026
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21STCV21966

Feb. 5, 2026

Headline: Judge Enters \$24.6M Default Judgment In Asbestos-Talc Suit

Result: \$20,463,015 default judgment (\$4,630,165 in economic damages and \$20 million in noneconomic damages)

Injury: Mesothelioma

Court: Calif. Super., Los Angeles Co.

Judge: Bruce G. Iwasaki

Plaintiff Profile

Stephen Anderson

Defendant Profile

Martin Himmel

Plaintiff Counsel

Leonard Sandoval, Dean Omar Branham Shirley LLP, Dallas

Case Summary

Claim: Mesothelioma

Background: Stephen Anderson filed a talc-related asbestos suit in the Los Angeles County Superior Court, claiming that he contracted mesothelioma. Anderson allegedly experienced exposure from, among other potential sources, asbestos in the talc that was used on him as a child and that he personally used between 1984 and 2007. Anderson allegedly used Gold Bond powder daily to prevent himself from becoming sweaty as he competed in football and power lifting. The suit named numerous defendants, including Martin Himmel, which allegedly purchased the Gold Bond line in 1990 and eventually sold the brand in 1996 to Chattem Inc. in a \$40 million deal.

Martin Himmel was served in November 2024 and answered the complaint in February 2025. Its counsel was relieved of its duties in October 2025, leaving the company without representation in the case. Later that month, the court struck the answer and found Martin Himmel in default. Anderson filed a statement of damages against Martin Himmel's agent, and the following month the court directed Anderson to file a default judgment prove up against Martin Himmel.

In a Dec. 12, 2025. brief in support, Anderson asked for \$60 million in noneconomic damages and \$4,630,165 in economic damages.

Other: After a hearing, Judge Bruce G. Iwasaki awarded Anderson \$4,630,165 in economic damages and \$20 million in noneconomic damages. The award was entered Feb. 5, 2026.

Judge Iwasaki's award is higher than the average jury verdict as tracked by Mealey's Litigation Report: Asbestos. In 2024, which is the most recent data available at the time of publication, juries across 25 asbestos cases awarded prevailing plaintiffs an average of \$21,370,446. That was up slightly from the \$20.7 million juries awarded

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on average in 2023 and well above the \$12,686,171 they awarded on average in 2022. The median verdict in 2024 sat at \$3.45 million.

Key Related Documents

Minute order.

Document #01-260211-090R.

Anderson's application for entry of default.

Document #01-260211-091M.

Anderson's memorandum.

Document #01-260211-092B.

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