

October 21, 2015

By Tina Tout
USMWF - Family Members

Douglas Tout, 44
Joel Cornelius Enterprises in Harrison, Ohio



My name is Tina Tout. On September 17th 2013 my entire life changed. My husband, of 20 years, Douglas Tout, fell 20 ½ feet off a roof suffering traumatic injuries which he died from the next day. He was working for Joel Cornelius Enterprises in Harrison, Ohio. He was a husband, father of 2 teenagers, a son, and a friend. Doug worked hard and even though we didn't have much to show for it we lived a very happy life together.

Doug was a carpenter by trade. He loved to build anything, and was very talented. He preferred building homes to repairing them but when the new home market went away he found himself roofing to support the family. He always said that roofing was a young man's game and that at 44 y.o. his back and knees made it rough to do the job every day. But every day he was there, for his family. 6 years later he lost his life because of the job.

On the morning of September 17th 2013 Doug and I said goodbye and I love you to each other for what would be the last time. At 11:30 a.m. I received a phone call at my job from my son that Doug's co-worker had called his cell phone to tell him to get ahold of me and tell me that Doug had fallen and hit his head and was on his way to University of Cincinnati Hospital. I left work and headed to the hospital thinking how upset Doug was going to be that there was such a fuss being made. That when I saw him he was going to tell me he was fine and to hurry and get him signed out of there so we could go home.

That's not what happened. In fact Doug never woke up to say anything to me again. We sat for hours at the hospital while they tried to get the internal bleeding and swelling under control. His co-workers had come to the hospital but left when they received a phone call right before the OSHA inspector showed up. It was the last I heard from any of them. Around midnight the doctors told us that there was nothing that could be done for Doug and that we were going to have to make the decision to turn off life support and let Doug go. At 8:01 a.m. Wednesday September 18th the love of my life's heart stopped beating and he left me and our children forever.

It took the full 2 years to fight through the Workers Compensation system. His employer appealed the decisions every time we won. They said it was his responsibility to make sure he was harnessed on the roof. In reality the guys didn't load their trucks. The supervisor did. He didn't put them in there ever. Doug had told me on numerous occasions that the harnesses slowed them down and that the owner of the company only cared about the number of repairs they could get through in a day. He talked about how they would get in trouble if a full roof wasn't done in the promised time but that they were never measured properly and that they

almost never had enough materials put in the trucks to do the job, I know that the field supervisor was at the sites everyday bringing out extra materials and to check progress. They never had harnesses and the higher ups knew this. In fact since Doug's accident I have had someone tell me that they, themselves, have seen Joel Cornelius roofers on second story roofs without fall protection. Only foam from couch cushions to keep them from slipping. This company has learned nothing from my husband's death.

Doug's employer was originally fined \$8,400.00 for a repeat violation of failure To provide fall protection. They were able to get their fine reduced to \$6,000.00. \$6,000.00 for my family's demise. \$6,000.00 for the loss of my everything. Why, I wonder daily, are they able to negotiate this? I wasn't able to negotiate anything. I would love to have been able to take a lesser deal. Doug only hurt not dead. I would have taken that deal. How is it that the companies who are at fault for the deaths of their workers allowed to reduce their fines? If you want to know my opinion on the matter, I think that if the OSHA violation results in the death of the employee then they should not be eligible to reduce their penalties. I have been told that the fines aren't served as a punishment to the employers but are in place as an incentive for them to fix the problems and do better. A second chance for them. Where's my Doug's second chance? He paid, we paid, the ultimate penalty and we weren't even offered the opportunity for a reduction in that penalty.

Our family is forever changed by this incident. My daughter will graduate from college in the spring of 2016 without her daddy being there. She was the first in either of our families to finish a college education and he'd be so proud of her. How she kept going even through all we've lost. She won't have him to walk her down the aisle at her wedding or hold her babies. My

son and his father will never get through my sons teen years where they butted heads and get to the point where they are buddies. He won't have his dad to call and ask to come over to his home and help him with some repair or just to watch the game on t.v. and have a beer. My son, instead gets to live with the memory of them bickering about some trivial teenage/ dad nonsense that wouldn't have mattered in a day or so anyway. Me? I get to live however long without my best friend, protector, provider, the love of my life, my world. My daughter is away, my son will leave to begin his life, and I will be here alone talking to a photo and an urn full of ashes. It scares me to think that I have to face this world without Doug. I'm only 46 years old now. We were so looking forward to the empty nest stage of our lives. To travel, to get to know each other again after years of being mom and dad to get to be Tina and Doug again. None of us will ever, ever be.