

SIX CICERO OFFICERS FOUND NOT GUILTY IN EXCESSIVE FORCE CASE
SIX OTHERS WIN DEFENSE VERDICTS

CHICAGO- On February 15, 2008 a federal court jury recently awarded a defense verdict in favor of twelve Cicero police officers, represented by the Chicago litigation firm of Sanchez, Daniels & Hoffman, who were accused of police brutality and the use of excessive force in an incident that occurred in September of 2000. Six officers were found completely not guilty, and five others plus a lock-up keeper won defense verdicts.

On September 2, 2000, after receiving complaints from neighbors of loud music, cars parked illegally and kids playing in the street, police officers were dispatched to the home of Gonzalo Duran in the 1300 block of 51st Avenue in Cicero, Illinois. After cooperating with police requests on the first visit to the home, the police were again dispatched back to the home where the owner and partygoers became unruly and threw full cans of beer and other objects at the responding police officers. Police officers responded with the use of pepper spray and other levels of force to regain control of the party. Seven partygoers were arrested.

After seven and half years of discovery, the case involving 79 plaintiffs and 13 total defendants proceeded to trial on January 7, 2008 and ended on February 15, 2008. The defendants were represented by a team of lawyers from Sanchez, Daniels & Hoffman and the Del Galdo Law Group. Manuel “Manny” Sanchez, Emanuel “Chris” Welch, Susan Chae Corcoran, Meaghen Russell, and Emily Robinson (law clerk), of Sanchez, Daniels & Hoffman, represented the individual police officers and the lock-up keeper, and George Spataro, Austin Zimmer, and Veronica Bonilla-Lopez, of the Del Galdo Law Group, represented the Town of Cicero.

78 plaintiffs were represented by David Cerda, of the Cerda Law Group, Joe Lopez of Joseph R. Lopez, P.C., Mark Parts of Parts & Spencer, Ltd. and one plaintiff was represented by attorney Peter Bustamante. 55 plaintiffs received no compensation for the events that occurred at September 2, 2000 while 24 others were awarded a total of \$2.85 million.

Prior to trial, the plaintiffs' final settlement demand was \$8.6 million and the defendants were willing to settle for as much as \$3 million. During closing arguments, plaintiffs asked the jury to return a verdict in excess of \$21 million.

"This was a big win for the defendants, and it was a total team effort. We are thrilled with a verdict that vindicated so many of our officers," said Sanchez. "The plaintiffs have already indicated they will probably appeal the jury's decision."

Sanchez, Daniels and Hoffman is one of the premier defense litigation firms in the City. With the addition of partner Emanuel "Chris" Welch in July 2007, the firm took on the representation of school districts and municipalities, and is quickly making a name for itself as the firm to turn to in the defense of Section 1983 cases. "This is what we do, and I am proud of what we were able to accomplish working with the Town's attorneys at the Del Galdo Law Group," Welch said. "My hat goes off to them as well."

###