

## Civil Rights Lawsuit Settled by Robertson County, Texas and ACLU

2005-05-16

Robertson County, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and WilmerHale recently announced the resolution and an end to a civil rights lawsuit, which arose from the arrest of 27 African American residents in this Texas town. The charges against the Plaintiffs in this case were ultimately dismissed. The details of the settlement are confidential. However, both Robertson County and the ACLU are satisfied with the resolution of this case.

“The resolution involves the County only, and the individual Defendants are not a party to the settlement, and the suit against the individual Defendants is being dismissed with prejudice.

Robertson County is very pleased to have resolved this matter. The case was resolved and accomplished with the assistance and cooperation of the County’s insurance carrier. Our taxpayers are not affected by the resolution,” said Bryan F. Russ, Jr., an attorney speaking on behalf of Robertson County.

“We are very pleased with the settlement agreement,” said Graham Boyd, Director of the ACLU Drug Law Reform Project and an attorney for Plaintiffs. “The time for blame and recrimination is over, and we hope this settlement will be the first step of many towards improvement in relations between law enforcement and the community.”

[Kate Hutchins](#), an attorney with the law firm which served as co-counsel for Plaintiffs on a pro bono basis, added, “Our firm is proud to have been a part of this case, as our involvement follows in a tradition of public service that we have long embraced. The Plaintiffs are pleased with this result and look forward to moving on with their lives.”

Robertson County, the ACLU, and Hearne city officials will host a community meeting in the coming weeks. With a focus on reconciliation, the meeting will call for cooperative efforts to find effective ways to address drug abuse in Hearne and improve relations between the community and law enforcement.

The settlement agreement came almost two weeks after Chief Judge Walter S. Smith, Jr. of the U.S. District Court for the Western District of Texas, Waco Division, set a jury trial date for May 23, 2005.