IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT FOR
THE SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF IOWA
CENTRAL DIVISION

VERMEER MANUFACTURING COMPANY, Case No.
Plaintiff, 4:19-cv-00050
v.
THE TORO COMPANY,
Defendant.

HIGHLY CONFIDENTIAL - ATTORNEY'S EYES ONLY

DEPOSITION OF JOHN AZURE
Taken October 29, 2019
Scheduled for 9:00 a.m.

REPORTED BY: JONATHAN WONNELL, RMR

Vermeer Manufacturing Company - Exhibit 1019
Vermeer Manufacturing Company v. The Toro Company
EX1061 / IPR2025-00381 / Page 1 of 11
Kubota North America Corporation v. Vermeer Manufacturing Company

1 Videotaped deposition of JOHN AZURE, taken on
2 October 29, 2019, commencing at 9:07 a.m., at the law
3 offices of Briggs & Morgan, 2200 IDS Center, 80 South
4 8th Street, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402, before
5 Jonathan Wonnell, Registered Merit Reporter (NCRA
6 #835577) and Notary Public of and for the State of
7 Minnesota.
8
9 * * * * * * * * * *
10
11 A P P E A R A N C E S
12
13 On behalf of the Plaintiff:
14 MARC VANDER TUIG, ESQ.
15 RICHARD L. BROPHY, ESQ.
16 Armstrong Teasdale LLP
17 7700 Forsyth Boulevard, Suite 1800
18 St. Louis, Missouri 63105
19 (314) 552-6644
20 mvandertuig@armstrongteasdale.com
21 rbrophy@armstrongteasdale.com
22
23 (APPEARANCES continued on next page)
24
25

Vermeer Manufacturing Company - Exhibit 1019
Vermeer Manufacturing Company v. The Toro Company
EX1061 / IPR2025-00381 / Page 2 of 11
Kubota North America Corporation v. Vermeer Manufacturing Company

1 A P P E A R A N C E S (Continued)
2
3 On behalf of the Defendant:
4 MICHAEL M. LAFEBER, ESQ.
5 Briggs & Morgan
6 2200 IDS Center
7 80 South 8th Street
8 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55402
9 (612) 977-8400
10 mlafeber@briggs.com
11
12
13
14 ALSO PRESENT:
15 KRAIG HILDAHL, Videographer
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

Vermeer Manufacturing Company - Exhibit 1019
Vermeer Manufacturing Company v. The Toro Company
EX1061 / IPR2025-00381 / Page 3 of 11
Kubota North America Corporation v. Vermeer Manufacturing Company

1 P R O C E E D I N G S
2 * * * * * * * * * *
3 THE VIDEOGRAPHER: We're on the record.
4 This is the videotaped deposition of John Azure taken
5 on October 29th, 2019. The time is 9:07 a.m. The
6 deposition will be taken in the matter of Vermeer
7 Manufacturing Company versus The Toro Company filed
8 in the U.S. District Court, Southern District of
9 Iowa, Central Division, Case Number 4:19-cv-00050.
10 This deposition is taking place in
11 Minneapolis, Minnesota. My name is Kraig Hildahl,
12 the videographer, representing Henderson Legal
13 Services. Will counsel please identify themselves
14 for the record?
15 MR. LAFEBER: Good morning. Michael
16 Lafeber from Briggs & Morgan on behalf of defendant
17 Toro.
18 MR. BROPHY: Richard Brophy and Mark
19 Vander Tuig on behalf of the plaintiff.
20 MR. LAFEBER: Before we swear in the
21 witness I'd just like to note for the record that the
22 transcript will be treated as highly confidential,
23 attorney's eyes only, subject to our opportunity to
24 designate following receipt of the transcript
25 pursuant to the protective order.

Vermeer Manufacturing Company - Exhibit 1019
Vermeer Manufacturing Company v. The Toro Company
EX1061 / IPR2025-00381 / Page 4 of 11
Kubota North America Corporation v. Vermeer Manufacturing Company

1 * * * * * * * * * *
2 JOHN AZURE,
3 duly sworn, was examined and testified as
4 follows:
5 * * * * * * * * * *
6 EXAMINATION BY COUNSEL FOR THE PLAINTIFF
7 BY MR. BROPHY:
8 Q Good morning.
9 **A Good morning.**
10 Q I'd like to start by having you state your
11 name and home address, please.
12 **A My name is John Azure. My home address?**
13 Q Yes, please.
14 **A** REDACTED
15 REDACTED
16 Q And have you ever been deposed before?
17 **A I have, yes.**
18 Q How many times?
19 **A Just once.**
20 Q Just once. What was the nature or purpose
21 of that deposition?
22 **A It was a personal injury case.**
23 Q Out of curiosity, were you the injured
24 party or --
25 **A No.**

Vermeer Manufacturing Company - Exhibit 1019
Vermeer Manufacturing Company v. The Toro Company
EX1061 / IPR2025-00381 / Page 5 of 11
Kubota North America Corporation v. Vermeer Manufacturing Company

1 **kind of how we wrote this patent.**
2 Q Did you supply the information that's
3 reflected in column 2, lines 20 through 26?
4 MR. LAFEBER: I'm going to object to the
5 extent it calls for attorney-client privileged
6 information, I'm going to instruct the witness not to
7 answer.
8 BY MR. BROPHY:
9 Q Are you following your counsel's advice on
10 that?
11 **A Yes.**
12 Q Prior to Toro's development of the TX-1000
13 did you believe that adapting a vertical lift type
14 mechanism from a full-sized skid steer machine to a
15 compact utility loader chassis would be difficult or
16 impossible to achieve?
17 **A No.**
18 Q Why is this written in this passage then?
19 **A It's in the context of the patent and the**
20 **method that we did it and our claims are very**
21 **specific about our front supports and things we did**
22 **for that to get the durability we wanted.**
23 Q Where does it mention front supports or
24 anything else you just testified to in this passage,
25 column 2, lines 20 through 33?

Vermeer Manufacturing Company - Exhibit 1019
Vermeer Manufacturing Company v. The Toro Company
EX1061 / IPR2025-00381 / Page 6 of 11
Kubota North America Corporation v. Vermeer Manufacturing Company

1 **A It's back in our claims here somewhere.**
2 Q Well, but that's not the question I asked.
3 Where does the discussion of front supports or
4 anything else regarding what you just testified to
5 appear in this paragraph, column 2, lines 20
6 through 33?
7 **A Well, you have to read the entire context**
8 **of the document.**
9 Q Okay.
10 **A So that's more of a preface to the current**
11 **market.**
12 Q Well, this statement doesn't say it would
13 be difficult or impossible to develop front mounts,
14 right?
15 **A No, it doesn't say that.**
16 Q It says it would be difficult or
17 impossible to adapt a full-size loader arm to a
18 compact utility loader chassis, right?
19 MR. LAFEBER: Objection to the extent it
20 mischaracterizes the language in the patent.
21 **A Let's see. What section was this again?**
22 **I lost it.**
23 BY MR. BROPHY:
24 Q Column 2, line 20 and forward.
25 **A So it says "due to the size and durability**

Vermeer Manufacturing Company - Exhibit 1019
Vermeer Manufacturing Company v. The Toro Company
EX1061 / IPR2025-00381 / Page 7 of 11
Kubota North America Corporation v. Vermeer Manufacturing Company

1 **constraints." And that's how we tailored our claim,**
2 **was specific to our durability concerns and the way**
3 **we wanted to do it on a CUL.**
4 Q And size, right?
5 **A Generally speaking that was one of the**
6 **constraints.**
7 Q At the time this application was filed,
8 did you believe it would be a further advance in the
9 art to provide a way to safely and durably provide
10 high-lift loader arms on compact utility loaders?
11 **A Are you reading that from somewhere?**
12 Q That's just my question.
13 **A Say that one more time.**
14 Q Sure. At the time this patent application
15 was filed, did you believe it would have been a
16 further advance in the art to provide a way to safely
17 and durably provide high-lift loader arms on compact
18 utility loaders to extend vertical reach?
19 **A Not necessarily.**
20 Q Why not?
21 **A Because the art is out there for the skid**
22 **steers. That's easily adaptable. That's why we kind**
23 **of tailored this patent specific to our front**
24 **supports and the way we did it.**
25 Q Can you point to me in this patent where

Vermeer Manufacturing Company - Exhibit 1019
Vermeer Manufacturing Company v. The Toro Company
EX1061 / IPR2025-00381 / Page 8 of 11
Kubota North America Corporation v. Vermeer Manufacturing Company

it indicates that the front supports you just described are an important inventive concept?

A Well, let's see. Let's start with the description in some of the graphics. So we've got item 42 called out.

Q Which figure are you referring to?

A Figure 4. That also relates to item 46, so we'll have to read through any sections of those that describe that.

Q And I'm sorry. On Figure 4 you're referring to which reference numeral?

A 46.

Q And what is 46?

A 46 is our upper link. So 36 -- let's see. We'll have to read through it. 42, 36. 40 is also our cylinder location. 35 we'll have to read through that. 33 looks like our cross support inside our tower.

Q So where in the actual written language of the specification does it describe that front tower you described as being the key inventive concept of the patent?

A You're talking about in the detailed description?

Q Yes. Well, anywhere within the written

Vermeer Manufacturing Company - Exhibit 1019
Vermeer Manufacturing Company v. The Toro Company
EX1061 / IPR2025-00381 / Page 9 of 11
Kubota North America Corporation v. Vermeer Manufacturing Company

language of this specification.

A Let's see. Well, I'll start to look for some of these numbers. That will be a giveaway. (Perusing document). So I know in column 5 there's references.

Q Which lines.

A Generally starting before 10 there. That's the first reference I see to support assembly 33. And then it mentioned U-shaped support beams, 34.

Q Is there anywhere else within the specification that you believe the patent identifies those front supports as being the key inventive aspect?

MR. LAFEBER: John, if you need to take your time to read the patent, read the patent.

BY MR. BROPHY:

Q I certainly don't mean to rush you.

A It will take a while. So there's a lot of this column 5 that relates to the description of that. (Perusing document). That leaks into column 6 quite a bit too in that description. I don't know if it describes it earlier here in column 4.

Q And where in column 4?

A Well, that's what I'm looking. I'll have

Vermeer Manufacturing Company - Exhibit 1019
Vermeer Manufacturing Company v. The Toro Company
EX1061 / IPR2025-00381 / Page 10 of 11
Kubota North America Corporation v. Vermeer Manufacturing Company

1 **to read through it. (Perusing document).**
2 **Column 4 mainly describes the connection**
3 **of the pivots to the arm. So I think it mainly**
4 **starts at column 5 where we get to our -- we call**
5 **them our towers, but it's that front support**
6 **structure. And that goes right up to the end in**
7 **column 6 around 42 or so before it switches to our --**
8 **describing our traction control, which is actually in**
9 **a different patent number.**
10 Q Right. Other than those areas in
11 columns 5 and 6 that you've referenced, is there
12 anywhere else in the patent that you believe
13 addresses the inventive nature of those front towers?
14 **A Let's go to the claims.**
15 Q Mm-hmm.
16 **A So that's right in the first claim. It**
17 **describes how our pivot arm is connected to the front**
18 **support assembly.**
19 Q And that's in which claim?
20 **A Right in claim 1.**
21 Q Okay.
22 **A And that describes our linkages going from**
23 **the rear, our loader arm, forward towards our front**
24 **support.**
25 Q And that's, for example, claim 1,