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THE BLONIASZ CASE

THE NATIONAL LAW JOURNAL

VERDICTS AND SETTLEMENTS

HEADLINE: Notable Judgment

BODY:

Case Type: personal injury

Case: Bloniasz v. Phelan, 95-0667 (Super. Ct., Worcester, Mass.)

Winning Attorney: Edward C. Bassett, Jr. of Worcester's Mirick O'Connell

Worcester Superior Court Judge Peter A. Velis entered a judgment of \$15 million against a drunk driver who smashed into a car driven by plaintiff, Wendy Bloniasz. Ms. Bloniasz sustained permanent brain damage in the May 1993 accident, including memory loss and cognitive deficits, said her attorney, Edward C. Bassett, Jr. The driver of the other car, John Phelan, was "on a drunken rampage" before hitting Ms. Bloniasz' car, Mr. Bassett said. He pled guilty to driving under the influence and leaving the scene of an accident; he was sentenced to eight to ten years in jail.

Ms. Bloniasz sued Mr. Phelan and six bars where he drank before the accident. The bars settled before trial for undisclosed amounts. Judge Velis added \$7.65 million in interest to the judgment; the total award was \$22.65 million. The award is believed to be the largest personal injury judgment in the history of Worcester County.