



Contractor Who Slipped on Ice at Home-Building Site Wins \$1.15M



FALL TIED TO COVERED ICE: Bruce Stern claimed his client slipped, and suffered brain trauma, because snow had not been cleared.

A businessman allegedly injured in a fall on ice at a client's home-construction site accepted \$1.15 million to settle his Middlesex County suit, *Condracci v. JW Custom Homes*.

The driveway of the Livingston property had not been cleared on Jan. 15, 2009, when Edward Condracci slipped on ice underneath the snowfall, hit his head and suffered a mild brain trauma, according to the suit.

Condracci, now 47, an employee and 10 percent owner of Electronics Design Group in Piscataway, had to retire and sell out his interest because the trauma has diminished his concentration ability and prevents him from doing his work, says his attorney, **Bruce Stern of Stark & Stark** in Lawrenceville.

Named defendants in the premises-liability suit were homeowner Jeremy Halpern, who was acting as his own general contractor, and JW Custom Homes LLC of Newfoundland, Halpern's construction manager.

The case settled on Feb. 22 in mediation with retired Superior Court Judge **Jack Lintner**, of Bridgewater's **Norris, McLaughlin & Marcus**.

Halpern's carrier, Fireman's Fund Ins. Co., and JW Custom Homes' carrier, Colony Ins. Co., each will pay \$575,000. The award will be offset by a \$196,000 workers' compensation lien.

Fireman's Fund retained **Emery Mishky**, of **Margolis Edelstein** in Berkeley Heights, and Colony retained **Brian Harris**, of **Livingston's Braff, Harris & Sukoneck**. Both confirm the amount of the settlement.

— *By Michael Booth*

\$900,000 for Pedestrian Injuries

Rivera v. Polo: A Kearny man knocked over by a passing truck's mirror as he was on his way home from a party accepted \$900,000 to settle his suit over alleged brain and leg injuries.

On June 12, 2010, Ricardo Rivera

was being driven home by his brother, Marco, but they got into an argument and Ricardo exited the car. Wearing dark clothing, he was walking or standing on Green Pond Road in Rockaway, which has one lane in each direction and no sidewalk, when he was hit on the head and knocked down, according to the Hudson County suit.

Marco testified that Ricardo, then 26, had been drinking at the party and police responding to the accident said they smelled alcohol on his breath, but the hospital did no blood-alcohol test.

The truck driver, **Ralph Polo**, an employee of North Jersey Media Group who was driving a truck to a company facility, did not stop, later claiming he did not know he hit Rivera, says plaintiff lawyer **John Molinari**, of **Blume Goldfaden Berkowitz Donnelly Fried & Forte** in Jersey City.

Molinari said Rivera suffered a depressed skull fracture and bleeding inside his skull, for which he had surgery to ease the swelling by removing a piece of bone, and that he underwent open-reduction and internal fixation for fractured leg bones. He has residual memory and concentration problems.

North Jersey Media Group law-



PHOTO BY CAROL VALTUKU

AUTO ACCIDENT BLAMED FOR BRAIN INJURIES: John Molinari says his client was left with memory problems after being hit by a passing truck's mirror.

yer **John Fearnus**, of **Lamb, Kretzer Reinman & Roselle** in Jersey City, confirms the Feb. 22 settlement. Molinari says part of it likely will be structured.

— *By Mary Pat Gallagher*

\$575,000 for Crash Injuries

Perman v. Morcos: A motorist accepted \$575,000 on Jan. 22 to settle his Bergen County suit alleging injuries in a crash on the George Washington Bridge.

On March 17, 2010, Gopaul Perman, then 50, alleged he was in the eastbound right lane on the upper level of the bridge when a van trying to merge from the left hit his car on the driver side.

Perman injured his lower back and required a one-level lumbar fusion



DISABLING CAR CRASH: Fredrick Schreck says his client, a former typesetter, could no longer work after a collision on the George Washington Bridge.

and epidural injections, says his lawyer, Newark solo **Fredrick Schreck**. Employed as a typesetter, Perman was deemed totally disabled by the Social Security Administration.

Perman sued the van's driver, Joseph Morcos, and its owner, **Kulite Semiconductor Products Inc.** of Leonia, for whom Morcos worked.

The defendants did not dispute liability but said Perman's back problems were partly pre-existing, Schreck says.

They agreed to settle in mediation with retired Middlesex County Superior Court Judge **Mark Epstein**, of counsel with **Hosigland, Longo, Moran, Dunst & Doukas** in New Brunswick.

Kulite's carrier, **Travelers Ins. Co.**, retained **Michael Mourtzanakis** of **William Staehle's** firm in Morristown.

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