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## \$4.15M for Product Liability

**Silvestro v. Groupe Lacasse Inc.:** A worker who suffered head injuries from a falling 150-pound hutch settled with the manufacture last Monday for \$4 million.

George Silvestro was at his desk at Expand Networks Inc. in Roseland on March 10, 2003, when the hutch on his desk fell on his head. Now 50, he suffers from memory loss, vision

problems, vertigo and stuttering, say his lawyers, **David Mazie** and **Adam Slater** of **Mazie Slater Katz & Freeman** in Roseland.

The suit charged the accident was due to a defect in the hutch-desk, made by Groupe Lacasse Inc. of St. Pie, Quebec. The hutch was attached with one-sided tape, not metal brackets or straps. The defense argued the tape

was adequate, that alternate designs would have ruined the aesthetics and that there was evidence the injuries were psychosomatic, Mazie says.

Group Lacasse lawyer **Thomas Kuzmick** of **Rawle & Henderson** in Philadelphia did not return calls.

The case settled in mediation with retired judge **Mark Epstein** of **Hoagland, Longo, Moran, Dunst & Doukas** in New Brunswick.

Mazie says Silvestro earlier settled for \$150,000 with furniture supplier Eagle Office Furnishings Inc. of Windsor, Ontario, represented by **Michelle Wall** of **Melli, Guerin & Wall** in Paramus.

A workers' compensation lien of \$250,000 will be paid, Mazie says.

— By Henry Gottlieb