

## \$715,000 Settlement for Premises Liability Lawsuit



### **\$715,000 for Premises Liability**

May 15, 2000

*Blair v. Grey Manor Motel*: Two North Wildwood motels that allegedly condoned underage drinking by guests agreed Thursday to pay \$715,000 to a patron who allegedly suffered disabling injuries in an assault by another reveler.

Brian Blair of Middletown, who was 20 at the time of the June 1, 1997, incident, claimed Luke Krasowski, of Williamstown, then 17, turned combative after drinking excessively at the Grey Manor Motel and a motel across the street, the Sea Gull Apartments. Many of the guests were attending prom parties.

Blair's lawyer, David Mazie of Livingston's Nagel Rice Dreifuss & Mazie, says police reports and other evidence showed that the proprietors had a history of allowing underage drinking on their premises. In a short period of time, Krasowski drank so much Goldschlager liqueur that his blood alcohol was probably 4.5 times the legal limit, making him prone to violence, according to a report by the plaintiff's toxicology expert, Richard Saferstein of Philadelphia.

When the plaintiff was struck, he hit his head on a parking lot bumper, resulting in cognitive impairment, permanent vertigo and loss of hearing, says Mazie, who was assisted by associate Eric Katz.

Under the settlement reached during jury selection before Monmouth County Superior Court Judge Jamie Perri, Grey Manor Motel will pay \$500,000 and Sea Gull \$215,000. As a result of the settlement, all claims against Krasowski, a third-party defendant represented by Patrick Grimes of Cherry Hill's Grimes & Grimes, were dismissed. Krasowski did not contribute to the settlement.

The defense had prepared evidence that the history of teen-age drinking at the motels was not as bad as the plaintiff alleged and the defense was prepared to challenge the plaintiff's medical evidence.

Partner Sean Kelly and associate Sharon Connors of Westmont's Marks, O'Neill, O'Brien & Courtney represented Sea Gull Apartments. Darryl Beckman, an associate in the Cherry Hill office of Short Hills' Budd Larner Gross Rosenbaum Greenberg & Sade, represented Grey Manor Motel.

-- By Henry Gottlieb