



Suit Over 'Haunted House' Eye Injury Settles for \$1.4 Million in Middlesex

An Edison woman who claimed she was blinded in an accident at a school Halloween event won a \$1.4 million settlement of her suit, *Majmundar v. J.P. Stevens High School*.

On Oct. 29, 2009, a "haunted house" had been erected on the stage of the auditorium at J.P. Stevens High School in Edison. Visitors entered the attraction through a rear door to the stage. Latta Majmundar, attending the event with her grandson and a neighbor, became separated from her group, walked through the dimly lit house by herself and fell three feet off the edge of the stage. She later said she did not know she was on a stage.

According to the suit, she ruptured the globe of her left eye. She also suffered trauma to her right eye, which had been diagnosed with myopic macular degeneration 30 years earlier but still had some vision. Majmundar, 75, is now blind in her left eye and nearly blind in the right eye, says **David Mazie**, who represented her along with **David Freeman**, both of **Mazie, Slater, Katz & Freeman** in Roseland.

The Middlesex County suit named as defendants the school, the Edison Board of Education and drama club advisers Ashley Bowen and Darlene Rich. Rich alleged that she had no involvement in the planning, operation or supervision of the event, leaving it all to students.

Mazie retained a school safety expert who opined that the defendants were negligent in failing to have an adult involved in the planning, design or supervision of the haunted house; to have adequate lighting; to erect barriers at the edge of the stage; and to have guides to render assistance to visitors.

The parties settled on Aug. 1 after mediation with retired Judge **Mark Epstein**, of **Hoagland, Longo, Moran, Dunst & Doukas** in New Brunswick.

Defense lawyer **William Bloom** of **Methfessel & Werbel** in Edison confirms the settlement.

— By *Charles Toutant*