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Suits & Deals

\$1.5M Auto Verdict in Ocean

Reckhow v. Gray: In a motor vehicle case tried before Superior Court Judge James Den Uyl, an Ocean



COURTESY OF MATTHEW MENDELSON

County jury awarded \$1.5 million on March 15. The total recovery is to be \$1.78 million.

The jury rendered a verdict to plaintiff Nicoletta Reckhow for \$1.5 million for pain and suffering resulting from injuries she sustained from an accident that occurred in early 2016 in Toms River.

The jury determined that Reckhow's neck and shoulder injuries were caused, and her medi-

cal treatment necessitated, by the accident. According to an agreement reached by the parties before trial, because the jury found causation, the court will mold the verdict to include a health insurance lien of \$195,408.52, according to Matthew R. Mendelsohn and



PHOTO BY CARMEN NATALE

Adam M. Epstein of Mazie Slater Katz & Freeman in Roseland, counsel to Reckhow.

When \$90,901.76 in prejudgment is added, the total recovery is in excess of \$1.78 million, they said.

The accident occurred on Jan. 18, 2016, when Reckhow, now 62, was traveling northbound from Romana Lane, through the intersection of Route 37, and towards Bananier Drive, in

Toms River in her 2011 Honda Accord, the lawyers said.

Reckhow, of Weehawken, was at a complete stop at a red light at the intersection when the light turned green and she began to proceed through the intersection, across Route 37. That's when defendant Natale Gray, traveling eastbound on Route 37 at the same intersection in a 2008 GMC Sierra pickup truck at approximately 60 mph, accelerated and went through the intersection, despite having a red light, according to Mendelsohn.

This resulted in a collision between the front of Gray's truck and the side of Reckhow's vehicle, causing Reckhow's Accord to spin around multiple times and strike the concrete median head-on, Mendelsohn said.

Gray, 21, of Whiting, was represented by Sonya Bright of Marie Carey's law office in Florham Park. Bright did not return a call on the verdict.

Kelly Gray, the defendant's mother, was listed as co-defendant because she owns the GMC Sierra, according to court documents. She was not in the truck at the time of the accident.

Plaintiff Reckhow suffered several bone and rib fractures, including a disc herniation requiring surgery, and rotator cuff tear to her left shoulder from the collision, her lawyers said.

Mendelsohn said due to the injuries and surgeries, his client's right pinky finger no longer bends, preventing her right hand from functioning normally, and she has pain and reduced range of motion in her neck and shoulder.

— Suzette Pamley