SOUTH JERSEY'S NEWSPAPER
COURIER-POST
A GANNETT NEWSPAPER THURSDAY, JANUARY 31, 1991

MAN AWARDED $1.5 MILLION IN ACCIDENT CASE

By SHARON WILMORE
Courier-Post Staff

MOUNT HOLLY- A Burlington County jury awarded $1.5 million to a man from Philadelphia who lost part of his left hand following a car accident on Route 73 in Palmyra three years ago.

Rohan Randial, 25, filed suit against the State of New Jersey, charging that it failed to properly maintain the section of the highway where the accident occurred.

The jury award, made on Tuesday, was one of the largest in the county's history, according to Burlington County Superior Court Assignment Judge Harold B. Wells III.

Randial's attorney, John Baldante of Cherry Hill, said the accident occurred on Nov. 11, 1986, as Randial was traveling on Route 73 between the Fifth and Broad Street trestles. Baldante said that as Randial turned a curve, the car struck a wheel rut, which caused it to hydroplane. Baldante said Randial lost control of the car and hit a utility pole.

Baldante argued during the two-and-a-half-week trial, heard before Superior Court Judge Patricia LeBon, that the State was aware of the road problem but failed to do anything about it.

The attorney said there were wheel ruts 3/8-inch deep on the highway. He said wheel ruts of 1/8-inch deep are considered dangerous.

According to Baldante, State Department of Transportation memos showed a high number of accidents on that section of the highway during the four years before Randial's accident. Baldante said there had been 16 accidents, 11 of which involved vehicles striking the same utility pole as Randial.

"That should have raised a red flag with the State," he said.

Calls placed to the State Attorney General's Office yesterday were not returned.

Randial suffered the loss of his middle, ring and pinky fingers through amputation following the accident, according to Baldante. He said his client also suffered a fractured pelvis.

He said Randial, a copier repairman, will suffer in his work. He said Randial will forever have phantom pain and will require a new prosthesis every two to four years.

Baldante

REPRINTED WITH PERMISSION OF THE COURIER-POST