

## \$1,800,000 Structured Settlement for Fatal Car Accident Involving a Commercial Farm Truck

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Betcher v. Casole: The wife of a Union Beach man who was killed in a [car accident](#) with a [commercial farm truck](#) that failed to stop at an intersection agreed to a \$1.8 million structured settlement last Monday with the truck driver and his mechanic.

Patricia Betcher, the wife of Paul Betcher, 44, who was killed in the accident in Union Beach on Oct. 18, 1994, agreed to settle her [wrongful death suit](#) against the driver, Anthony Casole, 38, of Marlboro, and Nitche Sunoco on Rts. 34 and 520 in Marlboro.

The gas station paid half the settlement, according to lawyers on both sides. The accident allegedly was caused when the brakes failed on Casole's truck and he ran a stop sign. It was later discovered the truck's brakes were in terrible shape, even though the Sunoco station had inspected the truck two weeks before the accident, and it passed, according to Casole's attorney, Norman Hobbie, a partner in Middletown's Giordano Halleran & Ciesla. "The brakes were in such bad shape, how could the truck have passed inspection?" Hobbie asks. "There was no wrongdoing on the part of my client. He did not have to pay any money for punitives or excess damages."

Betcher's attorney from Eichen Crutchlow Zaslow, LLP, says his client will receive \$30,000 a year until she is 74.

Her attorney filed suit on Patricia Betcher's behalf in December 1994. He says his client, who works as a department store check-out clerk, is set for life: "She'll be able to live without worrying. She's safe. The settlement doesn't need to be approved by a court. It's a done deal."

Marc Baldwin, a partner in Marlboro's Parker, McKay & Criscuolo, who represents one of the insurers in the case, did not return three telephone calls last week.

By Lisa Brennan

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