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Record personal injury award handed down against trucking company



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A Sacramento County jury handed down a record personal injury verdict of \$34.9 million on Dec.6 to a Galt man and his wife, who suffered a head injury and was paralyzed from the waist down when a semi truck crossed the center line and plowed into her bus.

Personal injury claims were made against Silva Trucking Inc. of French Camp and semi operator [Elaine McDonold](#), after the October 11, 2010 accident. A total of \$31.9 million was

awarded to [Debra Hackett](#) for personal injury; \$3 million was awarded to [Bill Hackett](#) for loss of consortium.

"It's a heartwarming result," said plaintiffs' lawyer [Robert Buccola](#) of Sacramento. "Sacramento juries don't award judgments like this. You really have to convince them beyond a reasonable doubt."

Efforts to reach San Francisco attorney [Kevin Cholakian](#), who represents the defendants, were unsuccessful. It's unclear whether defendants will appeal the verdict.

In pre-litigation, defendants' insurers declined a demand for \$5 million. A year before trial, defendants also turned down an offer to settle for \$12.5 million.

Kathy Robertson covers health care, law and lobbying, labor, workplace issues and immigration for the Sacramento Business Journal.

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