

MAY 1, 2023



Motorist Recovers \$4.1 Million After Crash Resulting From Blown Stop Sign

A \$4.1 million settlement was reached on Feb. 1 in a Middlesex County case, *Fernandez-Hoppe v. Depena*, concerning injuries sustained in an intersection collision.

On Dec. 18, 2019, plaintiffs Lynannett Fernandez and her husband, Orlando Hoppe-Bermeo, were driving on South Main Street in Cranbury when defendant Wamdell Depena of Reliable Office Solutions NJ Inc. disregarded a stop sign and pulled into their path, according to plaintiffs attorney **Daniel N. Epstein** of **Epstein Ostrove** in Edison. Hoppe-Bermeo was operating the vehicle with his wife in the passenger seat when Depena struck their car, Epstein said.

Hoppe-Bermeo's expert in orthopedic surgery, Dr. Nirav Shah, stated that as a result of the vehicle crash, he has suffered L4-L5 post-traumatic disc herniation, permanent internal and external cervical scarring, intractable cervialgia with rad-

iculopathy, and that he required future spinal fusion surgery at the C5-C6 level. A psychologist and neuropsychologist specialist, Dr. Michael Natale, stated that Hoppe-Bermeo suffered from predominant depression and anxiety due to his injuries sustained from the crash.

Fernandez was treated by Dr. Wayne Fleischhacker, who found that she sustained bodily injuries requiring her to undergo a lumbar epidural steroid injection and lumbar epidurogram for pain management. As a result of her injuries from the crash, Fernandez eventually needed a cervical radical discectomy surgery at C5-C6.

Both Fernandez and Hoppe-Bermeo claimed vocational and economical losses.

The parties settled for \$4.1 million in mediation with **Jack L. Lintner**, a retired presiding Appellate Division judge with **Porzio Bromberg & Newman** in Morristown.



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"This settlement reflects the commitment of all parties to work together to approach a reasonable resolution to the crash that so impacted the lives of this couple," Epstein said.

Depena was represented by **Michael Lynch** of the Law Office of **Linda S. Bauman** in Morristown. Lynch didn't return a call seeking comment.

— Colleen Murphy