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— In the News —

In the collar counties

The family of a woman killed in a 2002 car accident on I-90 has settled a lawsuit against the other driver and the company that leased him the vehicle for more than \$1.5 million, according to the family's attorney.

Margaret Lewandowski was a passenger in a van with her sister and two other choir members who were on their way to sing at a mass at Rockford Cathedral. Their van was struck by a leased vehicle driven by Alexander Levine, who was 19 at the time.

Levine allegedly was speeding and lost control of the vehicle, which flipped across the median and struck the van. Levine obtained the car in Wisconsin, though it was leased in New York by his father.

A New York statute in effect at the time made lessors responsible for the negligent driving of lessees. Attorneys for DCFS Trust and DaimlerChrysler argued that the New York statute was not applicable.

McHenry County Circuit Judge **Michael T. Caldwell**, who approved the settlement on Tuesday, ruled that the statute was applicable even though the car was received in Wisconsin and had never been driven in New York.

Lewandowski was survived by three adult sons.

Under the settlement, DaimlerChrysler paid \$1.5 million; Levine paid \$75,600; and the driver of the vehicle in which Lewandowski was riding paid \$3,600.

The family was represented by attorney **Francis Patrick Murphy** of Corboy & Demetrio P.C.

James S. Smith of Ryan, Ryan & Landa represented Levine. **Ian A. Stewart** of Wilson, Elser, Moskowitz, Edelman & Dicker LLP represented DaimlerChrysler. **Thomas J. Long** of Norton, Mancini & Weiler P.C. represented DCFS Trust.

Vincent Lewandowski, Jr., et al. v. Alexander Levine, et al., No. 05 LA 310.