



Icy Stair Fall Nets \$1.32 Million

Laterza v. 800 Bloomfield Ave. Realty: A man who injured his ankle on the icy steps of his apartment building received \$1.32 million to settle his Essex County suit on Sept. 6.

On Jan. 5, 2014, Andrew Laterza, then 56, slipped and fell on ice as he walked out of his apartment in Verona. He suffered a fractured left ankle, which required surgery to implant a plate, pins, rods and screws. He also suffered nerve damage to his left foot, according to the suit. He later underwent another operation to remove the hardware and to have an external fixator placed on the ankle, and also a tarsal tunnel operation to relieve nerve damage in the foot.

Laterza claimed permanent nerve damage, pain and limitations walking. His doctors believe he will need a total ankle replacement or fusion in the future, said plaintiff lawyer **Richard Reinartz** of the **Reinartz Law Firm** in Hackensack.

Laterza sued the property's owner and management company, 800 Bloomfield Ave. Realty, which filed a third-party complaint against the snow removal contractor, Sal LeDonne Landscaping Co., for negligence. Laterza alleged 800 Bloomfield Ave. failed to keep the property in safe condition and failed to prepare for the snow and freezing rain storm. The property owner asserted that it was not negligent and that Sal LeDonne was responsible for maintenance of the stairs, according to Reinartz.

The case was resolved during mediation with former Superior Court Judge **Paul Vichness**, now with **Mandelbaum Salsburg** in Roseland. Insurance carriers for 800 Bloomfield Ave. agreed to pay Laterza \$1.3 million, and the carrier for Sal LeDonne agreed to pay Laterza \$20,000.

Jon Robinson of **Terkowitz & Hermesmann** in Somerset,



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representing Sal LeDonne Landscaping, confirmed the settlement. **Joseph McGlone** of **McElroy, Deutsch, Mulvaney & Carpenter** in Morristown, representing 800 Bloomfield Ave., did not return a call seeking comment.

— *By Charles Toutant*