

At least \$5m each awarded to two victims in accident

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CAMBRIDGE - Two men who were severely injured in a car-truck crash in Stow nearly two years ago have received an out-of-court settlement with the truck's insurers that guarantees each man at least \$5 million. The settlement could eventually come to more than \$20 million for both.

The settlement, approved by the Middlesex Probate Court Friday, is expected to provide lifelong care for Stephen P. Nichols, 32, of Maynard Road, Sudbury, and Robert Wuorio, 32, of Leasingal Road, Stow, according to Frederic N. Halstrom, one of the attorneys who negotiated it.

Nichols was permanently blinded and Wuorio suffered brain damage in the accident on Hudson Road in Stow on Dec. 20, 1983, Halstrom said.

According to police reports, the two passengers in a car driven by William Renfrew, 39, of Parker Street, Maynard, who was killed when the car became wedged beneath a truck operated by Seaward Construction Co. of Maine.

Tests on Renfrew showed that he had an alcohol blood level of .18 percent. A level of .10 is the legal definition of being intoxicated.

Halstrom said that the truck had parked by the side of the road and then had turned left into the path of Renfrew's car. The driver, Tyler DeVine Jr., 19, of Scarborough, Maine, said he had not seen the Renfrew car, Halstrom said.

Halstrom explained that the settlement, agreed to by the insurance companies for Seaward and the truck's owner, Interstate Equipment Corp., provides for professional care for the two men. If both live to their average life expectancies, he said, that care cost could come to \$20 million .

However, if both should die earlier, their estates are assured of a least \$5 million each.

The insurance companies are the Hartford Insurance Co., and US Fire Insurance Co. of New Jersey.

Under the so-called dram shop doctrine, a tavern may be held liable if a person served there causes an accident while drunk.