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## CTA will pay \$20M to woman hit by bus

Pact over leg injury is record settlement for transit agency

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A woman who was hit and dragged by a Chicago Transit Authority bus downtown will receive \$20 million for the severe leg injury she sustained.

The settlement is the highest with the CTA ever reported by the Jury Verdict Reporter.

Diane Schachner, then 57, was a resident of Pennsylvania visiting Chicago to help her daughter move into a new apartment, according to her attorneys.

On Aug. 2, 2019, she crossed the street just south of the crosswalk at the intersection of North Fairbanks Court and East Ontario Street.

A CTA bus, driven by Lanise Jones, was turning left from Ontario Street onto Fairbanks Court and hit Schachner, knocking her to the ground. She allegedly hit her head on the pavement and became pinned under the front tire of the bus.

According to her attorneys, Schachner was dragged for about 27 feet before the bus came to a stop on her right leg.

Her attorneys maintain she was fully alert while trapped beneath the bus for nearly 30 minutes until rescue personnel were able to physically

hoist the bus to free her.

Schachner's leg was crushed and she sustained a "degloving" injury to her right lower leg, as well as fractures to her ankle. Degloving is a traumatic injury that results in the top layer of skin and tissue being torn away from the underlying muscle, connective tissue or bone.

She has undergone more than a dozen surgeries on her leg, her attorneys said, and suffers from residual pain and PTSD. Her attorneys said she will never regain anything close to her physical capabilities pre-injury.

Schachner and her husband, Thomas Schachner, brought negligence claims against CTA and the bus driver in the Circuit Court of Cook County.

The suit alleged the CTA and driver were negligent in failing to yield to pedestrians, failing to maintain a proper lookout and failing to exercise due caution, among other claims.

The case was set for trial on March 3.

The case was mediated before retired Judge F. Keith Brown with ADR Systems. The parties came to an agreement in December, and the CTA board approved the settlement on Jan. 13.

Schachner was represented by Patrick A. Salvi, Sr., Lance D. Northcutt, Heidi L. Wickstrom and Jaclyn J. Kurth of Salvi, Schostok & Pritchard P.C.



**Patrick A. Salvi**



**Lance D. Northcutt**



**Heidi L. Wickstrom**



**Jaclyn J. Kurth**

"I think the Schachners are very happy with the settlement," Salvi said. "It represents the serious nature of the injuries and the fact that at the end of the day, the bus driver should have seen her and yielded to her. She had the right of way to cross as a pedestrian and she still had time on the shot clock for pedestrians to cross."

CTA and Jones were represented by Brian M. Nach of the CTA law department torts

section, as well as Jack Murphy and Dominick Savaiano of Nielsen, Zehe & Antas, PC.

"Based on the facts of this case and following mediation, CTA believes it is in the best interest of the agency to settle the lawsuit," the CTA said in a written statement. The agency said its excess insurance will reimburse CTA \$5 million plus costs of the suit.

The case is *Schachner v. Chicago Transit Authority, et al.*, No. 2019 L 009813.