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\$28.2 Million Awarded In Jet Crash

Woman Injured, Husband Killed In '89 United Accident

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A jury Monday put a price on the pain that Doris Levenberg felt physically and emotionally as a result of the 1989 United Air Lines crash in Sioux City that killed her husband and left her critically injured: \$28.2 million.

After deliberating for about three hours, a jury ended the weeklong trial by ordering United and two other defendants in the case to compensate the 70-year-old Indiana woman.

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The award is believed to be the largest arising out of the July 19, 1989 crash. Virtually all of the cases brought against the airline have settled, with the largest award being the \$25 million paid to the family of a Michigan man who died in the crash.

The case in Cook County Circuit Court was the first Sioux City crash suit in Illinois and only the second in the country to go to trial. The trial became necessary after a final settlement offer of nearly \$9 million was rejected, according to attorney Kenneth Allen. Allen and Robert Clifford represented Levenberg in the case.

Attorneys for United, McDonnell-Douglas Corp. and General Electric declined to comment. They also wouldn't say whether they would appeal the award, which could tie up final resolution of the case for several more years.

But attorney John Adler, who represented the firms, had asked the jury during his closing arguments Monday to award no more than \$4.7 million.

McDonnell-Douglas was the manufacturer of the DC-10 and General Electric produced the engine. It was the explosion of the engine which cut the hydraulic lines needed to control the plane that was ultimately blamed for the crash.

The companies never disputed their liability in the case—a common practice in airline litigation—leaving the compensation to Levenberg as the only issue for the jury to decide.

Allen and Clifford said Monday the award would compensate Levenberg for the more than \$900,000 in medical bills she has incurred and would insure that she could continue receiving 24-hour care.

Doctors say the woman has greatly improved as a result of years of physical therapy and care. However, she still relies on a wheelchair and a walker to get around and she complains that the pains in her body have never left.

Levenberg was seated in Row 36 in the back of the plane, with her husband Allan beside her, when the airplane crashed onto the runway in Sioux City as it attempted to make an emergency landing.