

Daily Journal

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TOP VERDICTS OF 2013

TOP DEFENSE RESULTS

Uno v. Toyota Motor Corp.

Toyota Motor Corp. emerged victorious in October from a \$20 million unintended acceleration lawsuit over the death of Upland resident Noriko Uno, whose 2006 Camry sped out of control and slammed into a tree more than four years ago. Jurors deliberated for five days following a two-month trial and voted 9-3 that Toyota did not design the vehicle defectively.

Instead, the jury unanimously found Olga Bello, a 90-year-old woman who ran a stop sign, broadsided Uno and set off the string of incidents that led to Uno's death, liable for \$10 million. *Uno v. Toyota Motor Corp.*, JCCP4621 (L.A. Super. Ct., filed Feb. 4, 2010).

As a bellwether state case for more than 80 similar complaints combined in Los Angeles County Superior Court, the verdict was a clear victory for the automaker, represented by attorneys from Bowman and Brooke LLP.

"We thoroughly investigated the Uno family's claim for nearly three years and determined there was nothing wrong with the car. It was a made-up case," Vincent Galvin Jr., lead attorney for Toyota, said in a statement to the Daily Journal.

Toyota began an intensive settlement process in February to end the hundreds of remaining unintended acceleration cases in California state and federal court.

Uno's husband and son argued that Toyota should have manufactured the 2006

case
INFO

Personal injury, wrongful death
Los Angeles County

Superior Court Judge Lee Smalley Edmon

Defense attorneys: Bowman and Brooke LLP, Vincent Galvin Jr., Mark V. Berry, Curtis E. Jimerson, Anne O. Hanna

Plaintiffs' attorneys: Mardirossian & Associates Inc., Garo Mardirossian, Armen K. Akaragian



VINCENT GALVIN JR.

Camry with brake override technology. The software brings the engine to idle when the brake and gas pedals are depressed simultaneously. Toyota, however, countered that its cars are completely safe and that Uno simply pressed the wrong pedal.

After the \$10 million verdict against Bello was read, lead plaintiffs' counsel Garo Mardirossian of Mardirossian & Associates Inc. said he "got the next best thing" to a decision against Toyota.

In January, Judge Lee Smalley Edmon

rejected Mardirossian's request for a new trial against Toyota based on her trial judgment concerning the automaker's right to defend itself over attacks on the safety credentials of the 2006 Camry and the court's refusal to instruct the jury on the consumer expectations test of product liability. Mardirossian said he plans to appeal the verdict concerning Toyota.

— Omar Shamout