

Focus: LAW

Big Cases, Big Money

VERDICT: Propane explosion

Nearly two years of litigation ended last June with a recorded settlement of more than \$21 million and additional confidential settlements in the June 2006 deaths of two Detroit-area attorneys—and injuries to their children and other family members in an explosion and fire at a Wisconsin resort cabin.

Patrick Higdon, 49; his wife, Peggy, 44; their three children and Mrs. Higdon's parents were vacationing at Cedar Grove Resort in Ellison Bay, Wis., when a propane leak caused by construction work triggered a huge explosion, leveling the Higdon cottage and several other buildings.

Higdon and his wife were killed. Daughter Megan, then 12, and her brother Patrick, 14, were seriously injured, while Patrick's twin, James, and their grandmother, Margery Brooks, were also injured.

The elder Patrick Higdon was a lawyer in the Birmingham office of Detroit-based **Clark Hill P.L.C.** Peggy Higdon, also an attorney, did contract work for **General Motors Corp.**

- **Venue:** U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Wisconsin, Judge William Griesbach
- **Filed:** Sept. 22, 2006
- **Plaintiff:** Kathleen Brooks, for the estates of Patrick Higdon and Margaret Mary Brooks (Peggy) Higdon
- **Lead attorney:** **Stuart Sklar**; Fabian, Sklar and King P.C., Farmington Hills
- **Defendant:** General Casualty Co. of Wisconsin
- **Lead attorney:** **Allen Ratkowski**; Piper & Schmidt, Milwaukee, Wis.



Stuart Sklar,
Fabian, Sklar and King P.C.,
Farmington Hills