

Harry A. Sieben - Press

Worker awarded \$800,000 after accident

by Jim Walsh, February 19, 2000

A Hennepin County jury awarded nearly \$800,000 this week to a woman who fell through the floor of the new Science Museum of Minnesota when it was under construction in 1998.

PCL Construction Services, the project's general contractor, was ordered to pay damages of \$796,800 to Fe' E. Clardy, who was an employee of a subcontractor. She was sweeping up debris on a plywood floor covering a hole when she plunged through the hole and fell 30 feet at the site in downtown St. Paul. She suffered a head injury, fractured pelvis, broken jaw and a broken foot.

No one saw the accident. Michael Hutchens, the attorney for PCL, said there was no proof that his client was negligent. Instead, officials at the Burnsville company think that Clardy had pried nails loose and moved the board to sweep debris to a trash bin at the bottom of the hole, Hutchens said.

"We were mostly worried, and it turned out rightfully so, that the jury felt so sorry for a horribly injured person that they would bend over backward to give her an award," he said. He added that he will appeal the verdict. Harry Sieben, Clardy's attorney, said of his client: "She was crying when I told her, because she had not expected to win."

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