

# 2015

NEW JERSEY  
LAW JOURNAL

PERSONAL  
INJURY

HALL OF FAME



## WINNER: PUBLIC LIABILITY

# ***Baker v. NJ Transit: \$17M Verdict For Woman Run Over by Bus***

Attorneys: William Greenberg and Lawrence Minasian

**T**he largest public liability result in 2014 was a \$17 million verdict in Essex County obtained by William Greenberg and Lawrence Minasian on behalf of a woman permanently injured when she was run over by a bus.

In January 2011, Angelique Baker had exited an NJ Transit bus in East Orange, New Jersey, when the driver, Jean Valme, closed the door on a drawstring bag she was carrying. The bus dragged Baker several feet as it departed the stop, and its right rear wheel ran over her, according to Greenberg and Minasian.

She sustained a crushed pelvis, numerous other fractures and a closed-head injury. During one of her 12 surgeries, Baker stopped breathing, which exacerbated the brain injury and led to a cognitive deficit. Now 42, she can walk short distances but is largely wheelchair-bound, her lawyers said.

NJ Transit contended that Valme's duty ended once Baker reached the sidewalk. The agency also argued that Baker's health problems, AIDS and past heroin use, could have contributed to her fall and shortened her life expectancy.

In a six-week trial before Superior Court Judge W. Hunt Dumont that was interrupted by holidays and weather delays, the eight-member jury reached a verdict after an hour and 10 minutes on Feb. 20, 2014. The panel unanimously found NJ Transit liable, assigned it 100 percent fault and awarded \$1.4 million for past medical expenses, \$3.6 million for future medical expenses, and \$12



William Greenberg



Lawrence Minasian

PHOTOS COURTESY OF WILLIAM GREENBERG AND LAWRENCE MINASIAN

million for pain and suffering.

NJ Transit's counsel was Thomas Hart of Ruprecht Hart Weeks & Ricciardulli in Westfield, New Jersey.

#### **About the Attorneys**

William Greenberg and Lawrence Minasian formed West Orange, New Jersey-based Greenberg Minasian in October 2005.

Greenberg practices primarily in the field of civil litigation. He handles wrongful death cases, trucking accidents, medical malpractice, insurance coverage cases, administrative law hearings, estate and probate litigation and legal and professional malpractice. He also represents clients negotiating commercial leases for restaurants and the food service industry.

A 1988 graduate of Montclair

State University and a 1992 graduate of New York Law School, Greenberg has also served as investigator, vice chairman and chairman of his District Ethics Committee.

Minasian practices in the areas of personal injury, workers' compensation, civil litigation and criminal defense. He also has experience defending public housing authorities, government agencies and law enforcement officers, in addition to representing medical providers in the prosecution of PIP arbitrations.

A 1991 graduate of Seton Hall University and a 1994 graduate of Seton Hall University School of Law, he served as a law clerk for Bergen County Superior Court Judge Arthur Troast after completing law school. ■