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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monica Forgues, et al. v. Heart of Texas Dodge, et al. Dane County Case No. 99 CV 952

\$1.85 MILLION SETTLEMENT OBTAINED FOR VAN CRASH ACCIDENT THAT KILLED SEVEN AND SERIOUSLY INJURED FIVE MAGAZINE SALES PEOPLE

(Madison, Wisconsin) – A \$1.85 million settlement has been reached in a case involving a 1999 van crash that killed seven and seriously injured five magazine sales people. The accident occurred when the unlicensed driver Jeremy Holmes, age 21, switched seats at 81 mph on Interstate Highway 90 north of Janesville, Wisconsin. Monica Forgues, then age 15, was left a quadriplegic from the horrific accident.

"This settlement will allow Monica, and all the other plaintiffs and their families to move on with their lives and try to put this terrible tragedy behind them," said Monica's attorney, Victor Arellano of the Madison law firm Lawton & Cates. "No amount of money can ever restore Monica back to the person she was before the accident," Arellano stated. "Monica will face substantial additional costs and difficulties the rest of her life, and this settlement is an attempt to help address those," he added.

Monica Forgues along with the other plaintiffs strongly believe that this lawsuit needed to be fought to help prevent other young people in Wisconsin from becoming victims of door-to-door organizations who expose them to unsafe working conditions. Even though the injuries the plaintiffs suffered can never be fully compensated, this litigation was significant for the following reasons:

- It assisted the Office of the Attorney General in successfully prosecuting the magazine company, Y.E.S., Inc., and its manager, Choan Lane, for criminal violations;
- It helped to ban the company involved from engaging in magazine sales in Wisconsin; and
- It facilitated imposing fines on the organization involved in the litigation.

"Through this settlement Monica Forgues is able to reimburse the State of Wisconsin and the taxpayers for the medical attention she received during this very difficult time," Arellano said. "She is equally concerned about protecting her ability to receive future necessary medical treatment," he stated.

All plaintiffs in this lawsuit and their families are thankful for the support they have received from people throughout the states of Wisconsin and Iowa. They also appreciate the efforts of Senator Jon Erpenbach, lead author of Senate Bill 475, who is attempting to pass legislation to correct abuses in the industry. However, the practice of exploiting young people in the door-to-door sales business continues. The lawyers who represented the plaintiffs in this case have donated \$20,000 of their attorney's fees in an effort to pursue and correct the exploitation.

The law firms contributing towards the donation include:

- Lawton & Cates, S.C., Madison, Wisconsin
- Habush, Habush & Rottier, Madison, Wisconsin
- Mark P. Murphy Law Office, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin
- Murphy & Prachthauser, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
- Wright Law Offices S.C., Montello, Wisconsin
- Gosma & Gallaher PLC, Davenport, Iowa
- Atterbury & Kammer, S.C., Middleton, Wisconsin
- Keberle & Patrykus, West Bend, Wisconsin

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