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Tucson woman awarded \$750,000 for whiplash

By Mark Turner
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A jury has awarded a \$750,000 judgment to a Tucson woman who suffered a chronic whiplash injury in an automobile accident.

Sydnie Oe'hlsen, 36, has suffered from a cervical sprain syndrome since the car she was driving was hit from behind by another car on Sept. 21, 1982. She was awarded \$600,000 of the judgment, and the remaining \$150,000 went to her husband, William.

The judgment, awarded Monday, was against Dominic Troncale, his wife and 21st Century Inc., a Phoenix construction firm that was employing

Troncale as a superintendent on a Tucson job site at the time of the accident.

Troncale was driving a company car when the crash occurred on North Campbell Avenue at East Allen Road. He said he didn't see Oe'hlsen's car, which was stopped at a red light, until it was too late to avoid the crash.

According to trial testimony, Oe'hlsen suffers from constant pain, severe headaches and restricted mobility as a result of the injury.

The injury forced her to quit work as an assistant in gymnastics and exercise classes at a gym owned by her family, according to testimony.

Various physicians, including pain specialists at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center in

Phoenix, were unable to control the condition, according to testimony.

The syndrome was described as cyclical: the pain causes muscle spasms, which in turn cause more pain.

Oe'hlsen's lawyers, Silas Shultz and Thomas McHugh, had asked the jury to award more than \$2 million.

Troncale admitted liability, but his lawyer, Donald Estes, sought to limit the size of the award. Estes told the jury that some physicians had been unable to determine a cause for the pain.

Judge Lina Rodriguez, of Pima County Superior Court, presided over the trial.