

VIRGINIA LAWYERS WEEKLY

NEWS IN BRIEF

NN judge approves \$9.25M asbestos verdict

By Virginia Lawyers Weekly Staff
June 11, 2007

A Newport News judge has affirmed a \$9.25 million jury verdict returned for the executor for the estate of a former Newport News Shipbuilding and Dry Dock machinist who died in 2006 from mesothelioma.

The case of *Oney v. John Crane Inc.* is similar to *John Crane Inc. v. Jones*, in which another Newport News Circuit Court jury awarded \$10.4 million to the administrator of the estate of a man who installed asbestos packing and gaskets in the engine rooms of ships in the 1960s.

The Supreme Court of Virginia heard arguments last week in *Jones*, Record No. 062164, and is expected to issue an opinion in September.

The two cases were tried under maritime law with other asbestos manufacturers as defendants. The jury was asked to apportion the liability of the manufacturers and concluded in *Oney* that John Crane's responsibility was 60 percent and Garlock Sealing Technology's was 40 percent.

John Crane was found to be 34 percent liable in *Jones*.

Robert R. Hatten, the attorney for both estates, had settled claims against Garlock in that case and a third defendant was insolvent, so the total recovery from John Crane in that case would be about \$3.5 million.

Oney was tried in April and Circuit Judge Timothy S. Fisher rejected John Crane's post-trial motions on May 25.

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707 East Main Street, Suite 1750, Richmond, VA 23219 (800) 456-5297 Fax: (804) 783-8337