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## Presenting the 'Largest Verdicts of 2010'

### *22 awards of \$1M or more*

**V**irginia Lawyers Weekly's survey of the "Largest Jury Verdicts of 2010" found 22 seven-figure awards last year.

Sixteen of this year's cases had a personal injury component, including seven medical malpractice verdicts.

Three of the four largest verdicts involved business disputes. To qualify for the list, a verdict had to be handed down by a Virginia jury – state or federal – during the calendar year 2010, for at least \$1 million.

The survey results begin on page 7.

Underground mining tires and a computer keyboard support system were the unlikely topics of the top two largest verdicts. *In Re: Outsidewall Tire Litigation* had the top award, \$26 million, in Alexandria federal court. It was based on the contention that a former

top salesman for the plaintiff conspired with a Chinese tire manufacturer and a tire distributor from Dubai to steal trade secrets and infringe on copyrights and trademarks.

The keyboard support system case involved the two leading companies in the field of ergonomic office products, which have been accusing each other of intellectual property violations for more than a decade. CompX International Inc. won this round with a \$19.3 million verdict.

The third business case has a more common fact pattern. Perot Systems Government Services Inc. alleged two former employees took confidential electronic information when they joined two employees of 21st Century Systems Inc. in that company's new government contracting division. A jury in Fairfax County agreed and awarded \$14.12 million.

The largest verdict with a personal in-

jury component, a \$25 million award for a merchant seaman on a tanker, had all sorts of other elements in play, including maritime law and even concern about the relationship of the defendant and the military with a foreign country.

The seaman alleged he was sexually assaulted by South Korean policemen and that the owner of the ship fired him on the pretext that he was intoxicated instead of providing him the medical care and benefits he was entitled to under the Jones Act and maritime law.

No attorney had more than one seven-figure verdict last year, but Newport News lawyer Robert R. Hatten ran up his string of years with at least one such verdict to five. All the cases involved mesothelioma that Hatten's juries found were caused in part by asbestos products manufactured by John Crane Inc.

— Alan Cooper