

Jury awards \$1.7 million in Metro North accident

POUGHKEEPSIE — A jury awarded a Newburgh woman \$1.7 million Monday for injuries she suffered during a mishap on a Metro North Commuter Railroad platform in 1998.

According to New Paltz attorney Andrew Kossover, who litigated the case on behalf of Gertrude Lee, his client was left disabled by the Nov. 30, 1998 accident at the Beacon station.

Kossover said that Lee, now 63, was rushing to catch a train to her job as a nursing care coordinator at the Jewish Home and Hospital in the Bronx when a conductor overrode the automatic door closing mechanism and beckoned her aboard. As Lee entered the train, it began to move and her left leg fell into a gap between the car and platform, Kossover said. The gap, according to Kossover, resulted from a missing edgeboard and was, along with the actions of the conductor, an example of negli-

gence on the part of Metro North.

In addition to a wrenched knee, which was later surgically replaced, Lee suffered additional injuries when the conductor dragged her from the gap and threw her to safety on the platform, landing on top of her. Because of her injuries, Lee has not worked since the accident, Kossover said.

According to Kossover, 11 witnesses testified during the 10-day trial including two doctors and an economist who estimated the income lost by Lee as a result of the accident. On Monday the jury determined that Metro North was liable in the case and awarded Lee \$500,000 in lost wages and another \$1.2 million for pain and suffering. The case, which was presided over by state Supreme Court justice Christine Sproat was put on hold for two years after an insurance company involved in the case went out of business.