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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Mother of Marple-Newtown graduate slain at the Shore will receive \$350,000.

Reported in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*

A Broomall mother who was awarded \$350,000 in a wrongful death settlement arising from the fatal stabbing of her teenage son in 1992 described her feelings yesterday more as an "emotional victory" than elation over a financial windfall.

"They could have given me 3-1/2 billion dollars; the money was not the issue," said Jeanne Amoroso, chafing at the notion that a dollar value could be placed on the life of her son, Michael, a 1992 graduate of Marple-Newtown High School.

On June 16, 1992, Amoroso, 17, died after he was stabbed during a Senior Week brawl in North Wildwood, N.J. Stephen Freeman, a wrestling teammate of Amoroso's, was charged with aggravated manslaughter.

In his 1994 criminal trial, Freeman was acquitted in federal court after testifying that he had acted in self-defense. The acquittal triggered a flurry of civil suits and countersuits in Delaware County and in Cape May County, N.J.

The New Jersey suit, a medical malpractice action filed against Burdette Tomlin Memorial Hospital in Cape May Court House, where Michael Amoroso had been treated, was later dropped by Jeanne Amoroso. But the Delaware County wrongful-death lawsuit, filed on her son's behalf by attorney Martin Rubenstein, led to protracted litigation. As part of a countersuit, Stephen Freeman father, Dennis, introduced two additional defendants who he contended had been with his son at the time of Amoroso's slaying.

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The \$350,000 settlement was recommended late last summer by Delaware County Judge Clement J. McGovern, Jr. and signed by him in November after a number of conferences with attorneys from both sides, McGovern said yesterday.

Under the settlement, \$300,000 will be drawn from a homeowners' insurance policy held by the Freemans. The rest will be paid through policies belonging to Michael Discher and Michael Quinn, the co-defendants brought in by Dennis Freeman, Rubenstein said.

Calling the case "very, very difficult" for all parties, McGovern expressed satisfaction yesterday that a painful trial had been averted. "It's a case just fraught with serious human emotion, and in this case it would have weighed heavily on everyone," he said.

Jeanne Amoroso characterized the settlement as a poignant conclusion to a legal struggle that "was starting to take a toll on me." Adding to her ordeal, she said, was her husband's recent death - from a heart attack she believes was prompted by stress.

Amoroso said her deceased son had appeared to her in a dream last summer, just before she learned of the settlement offer. "Michael handed me a bouquet of flowers and was crying," she recalled. "I asked him what was wrong." Soon after, Rubenstein informed her that Freeman's attorneys had accepted McGovern's recommendation.

Amoroso said her son's former girlfriend had interpreted the dream as a message of solace for the grieving mother: "She said he was trying to help me go on."

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