

Man awarded \$700,000 for injuries from '98 crash

By The News-Gazette

URBANA - A jury awarded \$700,000 Tuesday to a Champaign man for injuries received in a collision between his motorcycle and a car.

The jury awarded \$700,000 to George T. Hemrich Jr., who was injured in the July 21, 1998, crash. Hemrich, now 38, had sued the driver of the car, Dwanda A. Myers, now 59, also of Champaign.

"After medical bills and attorney's fees, the actual amount I will receive for my lifetime handicap is less than half of the awarded verdict," Hemrich said.

The suit, filed 10 days after the accident, said Hemrich was driving his motorcycle west on Anthony Drive and Myers was driving her station wagon east.

The suit said she made a left turn in front of Hemrich, causing the collision. It alleged negligence and willful disregard for failing to yield the right of way and for failing to look out for Hemrich. Myers testified that the sun was in her eyes.

The jury awarded Hemrich \$500,000 for his disability from his injuries, \$15,000 for disfigurement, \$67,000 for past pain and suffering, \$20,000 for future pain and suffering and \$98,000 for medical bills so far.

Hemrich's attorney, William Faber Jr. of Decatur, said Hemrich, a self-employed remodeling contractor, was disabled by the accident. All three major bones in his right leg were broken. The lower leg bones healed, but the upper leg bone has not completely healed and there is a 15 percent chance it never will, he said.

"I think the jury was impressed with his efforts to recover," Faber said. "We introduced evidence, including videotapes, that showed he had 154 physical therapy sessions and he worked real hard. Every session was a dance with pain."

