Top Verdicts of 2014

The largest and most significant verdicts and appellate reversals handed down in California in 2014.
$1.15 billion
People of the State of California et al. v. Atlantic Richfield Co. et al.

Public nuisance
Santa Clara County

Superior Court, Judge James P. Kleinberg


Defendants' attorneys: Barritt Beekman Paldenheimer & Scott LLP, Donald E. Scott, Jameson Jones, Joyce Phillipson, Melanie Pagani, James Mclane, William H. Faulkner, Siskind, Argo, Stave, Mccarthy & Paldenheimer

FROM LEFT, NANCY L. FINEMAN, DANNY CHOU, GRETA S. HANSEN AND JOSEPH W. COTCHETT JR.

In the world of big bet litigation, plaintiffs' lawyers are familiar with adding on a case to the long road. But when Cotchett, Pires & McCarthy LLP sued lead paint makers in 2005, attorneys had no idea it would take more than a decade to get a verdict.

"This was a case that started in 2005, the lead case. We had a few victories, but the case was dismissed, and we had to start over," said Nancy L. Fineman, one of the lead attorneys on the case. "But the case is now in the second, and we're making progress."

The case was filed in 2005 against 40 companies, including several of the country's largest lead paint makers. The companies were accused of failing to provide warnings about the dangers of lead paint. The lawsuit was filed in Santa Clara County Superior Court.

The lawsuit alleged that the defendants had failed to provide adequate warnings about the dangers of lead paint. The plaintiffs argued that the defendants had a duty to warn consumers about the risks associated with lead paint.

The defendants argued that they were not responsible for the use of lead paint in homes. They argued that consumers had a duty to test for lead paint and take steps to prevent exposure.

The case went to trial in 2014, and in 2016, the jury found in favor of the plaintiffs. The jury awarded $550 million in damages to the plaintiffs.

In 2018, the court reduced the award to $1.15 billion, citing a lack of evidence to support the jury's verdict.

The defendants appealed the verdict, and the case is now pending in the California Supreme Court.

The case is one of the largest environmental lawsuits in history, and it has been closely followed by plaintiffs' lawyers and defendants' lawyers alike.

In a statement, the defendants' lawyers said they were "pleased with the outcome." They added that they would continue to appeal the decision.

The plaintiffs' lawyers said they were "grateful for the support of the court and the community." They added that they would continue to fight for justice on behalf of those who were harmed by lead paint.

The case has been hailed as a "watershed moment" in the fight against lead paint, and it has been cited as a precedent for future cases involving environmental harm.

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*San Fransisco Special to the Daily Journal*

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