

suits & deals

\$1.7M for Injuries From Fallen Tree

Rohlf's v. Elks Club of Ridgefield Park: A town employee accepted a \$1.7 million settlement on Dec. 7 for injuries he suffered when a tree, located on property owned by a civic group, fell on his leg.

The accident occurred in June 1996 when Steven Rohlf's, an employee of the Ridgefield Park Department of Public Works, was removing a fall-tree.

Half of the tree's split trunk fell on his left leg, crushing it, injuring his knee and resulting in the loss of four toes, says his attorney, **Donald Caminiti**, a partner with **Breslin & Breslin** in Hackensack.

Rohlf's, who was 42 at the time, suffers permanent disability, has diffi-

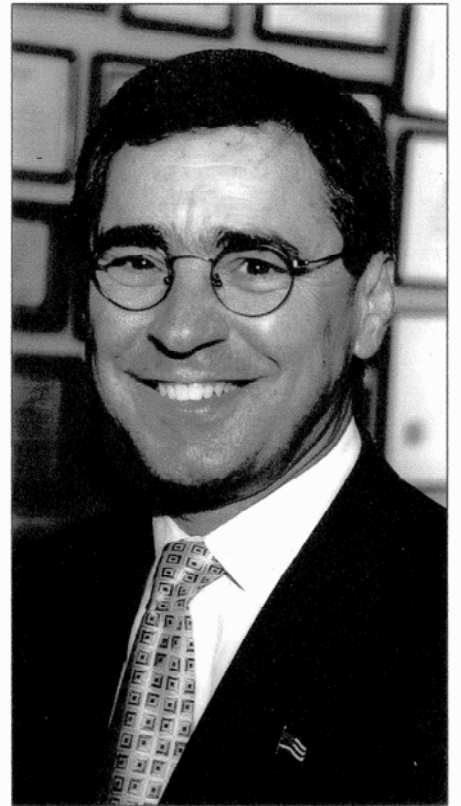
culty walking and has been unable to work in the same capacity since then, Caminiti says.

The plaintiff contended that the defendant, the Elks Club of Ridgefield Park, on whose property the tree was located, should have been aware of its potentially dangerous condition.

Caminiti says the tree was partially rotted inside and gutted by carpenter ants. He adds that several large dead limbs had previously fallen from the tree.

However, the defendant's attorney, **John Kennedy**, a partner with **Kennedy & Kennedy** in Bloomfield, says there were no outside signs that would have indicated to a layman that the tree was in danger of falling.

— *By Sandy Lovell*



TRICKY TREE REMOVAL: Donald Caminiti says his client, whose leg was crushed when a rotted out tree trunk split and fell on him while he was removing it, has difficulty walking and is unable to work in the same capacity as he used to.