



## Suit Alleging Wok Design Defect Caused Burns Settles for \$2.08M

**M***ansour v. Farberware Inc.:* An electric-wok company and three other defendants paid \$2.08 million on Feb. 7 to settle a claim that a design defect caused disfiguring burns to a child splashed with hot water almost 18 years ago.

On March 29, 1989, 3-year-old Leonora Mansour of Hackensack was setting a kitchen table when the wok's power cord became entangled in a drawer she was opening, causing hot water to spill on her, according to her lawyer, **Donald Caminiti of Breslin & Breslin** in Hackensack. The girl underwent surgeries and had permanent scarring from third-degree burns over 25 percent of her body.

The wok, a Farberware Inc. product, had a five-foot power cord even though the manufacturer knew safety standards required cords three

feet or less on deep fat fryers because of known dangers of entanglement, the suit alleged.

Caminiti says the defense contended the wok was not a fat fryer and that the standard did not apply, but the product manual mentioned that the wok could be used as a fryer.

Caminiti, who was assisted by partner **Angelo Bello**, says the case took many years because it was complicated, the injuries were severe and the chain of evidence was murky. The father discarded the wok after the accident and the power cord didn't surface until seven years later.

Caminiti and one of Farberware's lawyers, **David Field of Lowenstein Sandler** in Roseland, says the girl was alone in the room at the time and the cord was the only physical evidence. At a trial, ques-

tions would have been raised as to whether a Farberware wok or some other brand had even been involved, Caminiti and Field say.

Under the settlement mediated by retired Judge **Robert Feldman**, Farberware and three successor companies will pay \$2.07 million to Mansour.

The girl's father, who was in another room when the accident occurred, will receive \$125,000 for his emotional distress claim, according to his lawyer, **Bruce Dexter of Dexter & Kilcoyne** in Hackensack.

He says the settlement will be funded by cord maker Leviton Manufacturing Co. of Little Neck, N.Y., represented by **Michael Nestor of Lum, Drasco & Positan** in Roseland; Federated Department Stores of Cincinnati, represented by **Steven Daniels of Schenck, Price Smith & King** in Morristown; and a company that allegedly held Farberware records and was defending a spoliation claim, Syratech Corp. of Boston, Mass., represented by **Dennis O'Brien of Stevens & Schwab** in Secaucus.

**Joseph Richezza of Salmon, Richezza, Singer & Turchi** in Cherry Hill represented three successor companies that have owned rights to market Farberware products.

— *By Henry Gottlieb*