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## Estate settles for \$9.5M in police death

Off-duty Chicago cop struck by van fleeing Calumet Park police

BY **JORDYN REILAND**  
*Law Bulletin staff writer*

The estate of a Chicago police officer who was killed in 2014 when his car was hit by a van fleeing a Calumet Park police officer has settled its wrongful-death lawsuit for more than \$9.5 million.

The agreement came Oct. 30 in plaintiff Sandra Harris' lawsuit against the village of Calumet Park and Jerald Nettles, the police officer who pursued a vehicle that fatally struck Sandra Harris' husband, David, who was 42 at the time.

Sandra Harris filed the suit in September 2014, alleging the defendants acted with "utter disregard for the safety of others."

Harris was represented by Michael K. Demetrio, Thomas A. Demetrio and Robert J. Bingle of Corboy & Demetrio.

The lawsuit alleged willful and wanton conduct charges against the defendants.

In addition to the \$9,559,000 settlement, the judge ordered \$2,389,750 in plaintiffs' attorneys fees and \$86,662.95 in expense reimbursements.



**Robert J. Bingle**

The settlement was approved on Oct. 30, prior to an early October trial date, by Cook County Circuit Judge John Callahan Jr. and then approved additionally on Nov. 20 by Cook County Associate Judge Carolyn Quinn in the Probate Division.

David Harris, a 10-year veteran with the Chicago Police Department, was driving home from work on March 14, 2014, when a van driven by Shanell Terrell ran a red light and struck Harris' vehicle on the city's South Side.

The chase began when Terrell rolled through a stop sign and ended nine miles later, according to Harris' attorneys.

Nettles did not return to work after the crash, Michael Demetrio said.



**Thomas A. Demetrio**

In an amended complaint filed in 2015, Sandra Harris argued that Nettles and the village initiated a high-speed police pursuit that posed greater danger to the public than the need to catch the suspect. They also contended that Nettles continued the pursuit outside Calumet Park without approval of a supervisor.

"The case was particularly challenging due to the heavy burden imposed on the [e]state to establish that the defendants were willful and wanton in causing the death of officer Harris," Michael Demetrio said in a statement.

Defense attorneys argued that Nettles followed all necessary standards for a pursuit.

Terrell is facing first-degree murder charges in connection



**Michael K. Demetrio**

with the crash. Her criminal case is still pending.

Michael Demetrio said while there is never any comfort in losing a husband and father, the civil action allows the family to be financially secure moving forward.

The village of Calumet Park was represented by Patrick J. Ruberry of Litchfield Cavo LLP. He could not be reached for comment.

Jerald Nettles was represented by Michael J. Victor Jr. of O'Halloran Kosoff Geitner & Cook LLC in Northbrook. He could not be reached for comment.

The case is *Sandra Harris v. Village of Calumet Park and Jerald Nettles*, 14 L 9643.

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