

## **\$783,800 for Death by Auto**

*Vuotila v. Chesler*: The mother of a South Orange man killed in an accident with a drunken driver accepted \$783,800 on July 11 in her Essex County suit.

Ari Vuotila's car was struck on Jan. 27, 2009, by a car driven by a Millburn High School student who had been drinking after finishing a midterm exam. Richard Chesler, 17, was driving north on Long Hill Drive in excess of 60 mph in a 25 mph zone and went through a stop sign at Parsonage Hill Road, hitting Vuotila's car going east.

Chesler had a blood-alcohol content of .089 percent, pleaded guilty to vehicular manslaughter and is serving a four-year jail sentence, says plaintiff lawyer **James Foerst**, of **Spector Foerst & Associates** in Millburn.

Vuotila, 39, was dead on arrival at St. Barnabas Medical Center in Livingston. He was single and had no children. He was a named insured on two policies taken out by his father, Randall Chesler. The primary carrier, Liberty Mutual Ins. Co., had paid \$16,200 for property damage and agreed to pay out the rest of the \$500,000 policy. The excess carrier, Chubb Group, will pay \$300,000.

The carriers retained **Edward DePascale**, of Morristown's **McElroy, Deutsch, Mulvaney & Carpenter**. He did not return a call.

— *By Michael Booth*