

Melendez v. Spin Cycle Laundromat, LLC (AC 41410)

The plaintiff, Zaida Melendez, was at the defendant's laundromat when a folding table collapsed on her right foot—fracturing her right big toe. She brought an action against the defendant for negligence. The defendant raised the special defense of contributory negligence. At trial, the jury returned a general verdict in favor of the defendant. The plaintiff then filed a motion to set aside the verdict. The trial court denied the plaintiff's motion, and she appealed. The plaintiff's claims on appeal were that : (1) the trial court erred in allowing the defendant to present evidence of the condition of the table prior to the incident; and (2) the trial court improperly allowed the defendant to question the plaintiff regarding her disability and prior work history; (3) the court improperly asked the plaintiff's counsel whether he claimed his question in response to an objection because it drew unnecessary attention to the plaintiff's objection and created an unfair presumption that the defendant's objections were more meritorious than the plaintiff's objections; and (4) the verdict was against the weight of the evidence, shocked the sense of justice, or was based in partiality, prejudice, mistake, or corruption.

The appellate court stated that because the trial court's memorandum of decision on the motion to set aside the verdict thoroughly addressed the arguments raised on appeal, it will adopt the court's well-reasoned decision as a proper statement of the facts and law on the issues. Thus, affirming the judgment.

The trial court rejected the plaintiff's first two claims because the evidence concerning the defendant's prior safety experiences with laundry folding tables and the plaintiff's prior work history were relevant to material issues in the case—liability and damages. Thus, it was properly admitted as relevant evidence is evidence that has a logical tendency to aid the trier of fact in determining an issue. The above evidence pertained to resolving the issue of liability and

damages. The court rejected the third claim because it “lacks merit and doesn’t warrant further discussions. Lastly, the court held that the jury’s verdict was supported by evidence and there is no evidence that the jurors were influenced by prejudice, corruption, or partiality in the case.