

# Philly Pier Collapse Settlement Reached

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PHILADELPHIA (AP) - A pier owner and nightclub operator have reached a \$29.6 million settlement with the families of three women who died and the 40 people injured when the pier collapsed in 2000.

The settlement, which included other defendants, was finalized over the last week.

Lead plaintiffs' attorneys [Thomas R. Kline](#) and Robert J. Mongeluzzi said the settlement was expected to resolve all claims from the collapse of the pier on May 18, 2000, which spilled patrons of the crowded Heat nightclub into the Delaware River.

Kline said the families of the three women killed will each be paid \$7.4 million and the remaining \$7.4 million will be distributed through an arbitration process to the 40 people injured.

The various lawsuits alleged that the pier had been in a dangerous condition for years and an inspector had warned of imminent collapse.

Pier owner, Michael Asbell and club operator Eli Karetny have denied either having known that the pier was in imminent danger or having been warned of imminent collapse.

kline and Mongeluzzi said the main defendants were Portsiude Investors, Asbell's firm, and HMS Ventures Inc., which operated the club.

John F. Ledwith, the lawyer for Karetny, Hamilton and HMS Ventures, confirmed that a settlement was being finalized.

A Superior Court panel last fall upheld the dismissal of felony charges, including 43 counts of recklessly endangering another person and three counts of involuntary manslaughter.