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Former Penn student settles injury lawsuit

By Susan Snyder,
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A former University of Pennsylvania student who became a paraplegic after falling at an off-campus residence has reached an \$11.6 million settlement with the landlord's and tenants' insurers, her lawyer said Tuesday.

Lorna Bernhoft, who was 20 and a junior, was injured Oct. 12, 2010, while attending a student gathering at the residence at 326 S. 42d St.

Bernhoft fell 20 feet through a raised skylight/ventilation opening on the fourth floor of the building, said her lawyer, **Tom Kline** of the Philadelphia firm Kline & Specter.

The defendants included the building's owner, Joseph Palmer, and student tenants who were aware of the opening, which was covered only by flex board and carpet, Kline said.

The case was settled just before it was scheduled to go to trial.

After her injury, Bernhoft went on to graduate from Stanford University, Kline said. She now lives in Boston.

"The case," Kline said, "is important to the community because it recognizes that there are dangerous defects in rental housing, especially in off-campus housing, and every parent and student should be aware."