

#13.7 million awarded for wrongful death

by UPI

CHICAGO -- A jury in Chicago has awarded \$13.7 million to the family of a 22-year-old car salesman who was killed while taking a customer for a test drive.

Roger Czapski of suburban Crystal Lake was a passenger in a BMW 530i driven by Christopher Maher of Inverness when it struck a vehicle turning into a church parking lot, hit a light pole and exploded, the Chicago Tribune reported Wednesday.

Police said Maher was traveling about 95 mph when the accident occurred. Maher and two friends in the back seat survived the crash.

Defense attorneys argued Czapski contributed to his own death by taking Maher outside of the established test-drive route and encouraging him to speed.

The Cook County jury disagreed and found Maher 98 percent responsible for Czapski's death, the Arlington Heights Daily Herald reports.

Police said Czapski was the only occupant in the BMW who was wearing a seat belt.

Copyright © 2009, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

#13.7 million awarded for wrongful death by UPI