



\$50 million awarded in water-heater death case

David Ferrara, Press-Register By **David Ferrara, Press-Register**

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A Baldwin County jury awarded \$50 million today to the family of a Daphne man killed when his water heater exploded.

The jury took less than five hours to reach its decision after a 2½-week wrongful death trial in a civil suit filed by the family of Richard Krantz.

His family sued the water heater company -- A.O. Smith -- after Krantz died in July 2005, five days after he had gone to check on the water heater in his family's garage.

Plaintiffs lawyers argued that the heater exploded because of a faulty valve, while defense attorneys blamed the explosion on a natural gas leak in the garage.

During closing arguments in Baldwin County Circuit Court on Wednesday, attorney David Cain asked jurors to award the Krantz family more than \$42.6 million.