

A reputation restored

• Bank went above and beyond in mistreatment of fired vice president, Summit County jury says in handing down a record \$7.8 million in damages

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Ed Turner found justice Friday — nine years after he was fired from Bank One.

A jury in Summit County awarded the former bank vice

president \$7.8 million in his suit against the bank.

It is believed to be the largest civil award ever in Summit County. It tops \$7.6 million awarded in 1991 to a Hudson woman injured in a traffic accident.

Jurors found unanimously that Bank One had acted in an "extreme and outrageous manner" in dealing with Turner.

"He was abused more than necessary," a jury spokeswoman said after the verdict. "They

(Bank One) went above and beyond what was really necessary."

Bank lawyers declined comment and said no decision had been made on an appeal.

Turner, 61, held his chest and wept after the verdict was read. He was too overcome to speak.

Turner was in charge of Bank One's installment loan department in Ravenna in 1983 when someone



Fired Bank One officer Ed Turner won a record amount in Summit suit.

working under him made several hundred thousand dollars' worth of bad car loans. He took the fall.

He accepted the bank's right to fire him but not for what hap-

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• Jury doesn't agree that fired banker was dishonest

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pened after that.

Bank One filed a notice with its bonding company, claiming possible employee dishonesty. The pending dishonesty claim — the only way the bank could recover those bad loans from its bonding company — was kept open two years and then dropped.

No sooner was it dropped than the bank charged Turner with fraud in an entirely different loan matter, involving three separate bad loans to a Portage County woman. The bank, in fact, filed a civil suit against Turner in federal court, charging him with violating the same laws that are used to send mobsters to prison.

That accusation hung over his head for four years from 1985 to 1989. Then, just days before the trial, the bank dropped the case against him.

The net effect of the federal court case and the pending bond claims kept Turner from working

in the banking business, his attorneys Tim Scanlon and James Rudgers said.

He went bankrupt. He became distraught. He had a heart attack.

The woman to whom Turner made the questionable loans was ultimately sent to prison. She had conned not only him but several other area banks.

But her imprisonment didn't erase the cloud over his head.

Finally Turner, who now sells men's suits at an area mall, decided to strike back. He sued the bank.

During the two-week trial in the courtroom of Judge James Williams, bank lawyers argued that they has reason to believe Turner was dishonest and that they were acting within their right to file a suit against him and to file claims with their bonding company.

They pointed out that Turner hadn't done his homework in making the loans to the Portage County woman. He had overvalued a home used to secure a business

loan and hadn't checked court records to see its real value. He lent her money for a business that wasn't even registered with the Ohio secretary of state.

But Turner's attorneys pointed out that the woman was so convincing she had done the same thing to several other area bankers. They hammered at the contention that every time the bank had to prove its allegations against Turner, either at the fraud trial or to the bonding company, it backed away.

Jurors awarded Turner \$1.2 million in compensatory damages and \$3 million in punitive damages on his claim of emotional distress.

They awarded him \$2 million in compensatory damages and \$1.6 million in punitive damages on his claim that the bank had abused the legal process in dealing with him.