

Jury Finds LIRR Negligent in Fatal Brentwood Crossing Crash

Verdict and \$2.9 million settlement bring vindication to family after years of claims that the victims drove around lowered safety gates.

DELL & DEAN PLLC
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

GARDEN CITY, NY, UNITED STATES, June 9, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- More

than a decade after Blanca Maldonado

and her father, Jose Adolfo Reyes, were killed in a Brentwood grade crossing collision, their family secured a \$2.9 million settlement following a Suffolk County jury's finding that the Long Island Rail Road (LIRR) was negligent. The family was represented by [Christopher R. Dean](#) and [Kristen N. Sinnott](#) of Dell & Dean PLLC.



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*Christopher R. Dean, Partner
at Dell & Dean PLLC*

Maldonado, 45, and Reyes, 74, were killed on Jan. 22, 2013, when their vehicle was struck by an eastbound LIRR train at the 2nd Street grade crossing in Brentwood. Following the crash, authorities maintained that Maldonado drove around lowered safety gates, a claim her family strongly disputed.

For the Maldonado family, the verdict represented more

than financial recovery. It was a public correction after years of believing Blanca Maldonado had been wrongly blamed for the crash.

"This case was about accountability, but it was also about restoring Blanca Maldonado's good name," said Dean. "Her family never accepted the claim that she recklessly drove around lowered gates. The jury heard the evidence and reached a verdict that validated what this family had been saying from the beginning."

The case (Index # 070803/2014) centered on whether the crossing's safety system was functioning properly at the time of the crash. During the trial, Dean and Sinnott challenged the railroad's position and presented evidence supporting the family's contention that the gates did not come down before Maldonado entered the crossing.

The family's attorneys identified a motorist who was driving behind Maldonado and reported in a 911 call that the gates were up, the lights were off and the bells were not ringing as Maldonado proceeded through the crossing. They also questioned the railroad's reliance on crossing event recorder data, noting a timing discrepancy between the crossing data and the train's black box record.

"This was a long and painful fight for a family that had already suffered an unimaginable loss," added Sinnot. "We are grateful that the jury carefully considered the evidence and gave this family the vindication they deserved."

Dell & Dean PLLC is a Garden City-based litigation firm representing clients in personal injury, negligence and wrongful death matters throughout Long Island, NY.

About Dell & Dean PLLC

Dell & Dean PLLC is a Garden City, New York law firm representing individuals and families in serious personal injury, wrongful death, medical malpractice, construction accident, and negligence cases. The firm is committed to holding negligent parties accountable and helping clients seek justice after life-changing harm.

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