

Piedmont Wins Suit Over Jet

A Forsyth Superior Court civil jury has awarded Piedmont Aviation, Inc., \$4,500 damages after finding a woman negligent for running her car into an airplane as it was being towed across Liberty Street to a hangar two years ago.

Piedmont had sued Mrs. Ruth Davis Pruitt of Winston-Salem for \$25,466 damages to the underside of a leased Boeing 727 jetlines and for a loss of profits while the plane was being repaired.

The accident was next to Smith Reynolds Airport at 11:45 p.m. May 24, 1967. Crews were towing the plane to a hangar. Mrs. Pruitt, who was hospitalized with serious injuries after the wreck, filed a counterclaim for \$150,000 personal injuries and \$1,500 for her car, a 1965 Corvair which was a total wreck.

Woman's Claim

She said the airline was negligent in that the plane should have yielded the right-of-way to traffic, that lights on the plane blinded her, that the airline failed to maintain adequate warning lights and that the move should not have been made at night.

The jury ruled that Piedmont was not negligent.

The airline contended that Mrs. Pruitt was negligent in that she failed to reduce speed to avoid an accident, that she failed to yield the right-of-way to the airplane and that she failed to control her car properly.

Return Verdict

The jury of 10 women and two men heard the case from Tuesday until Friday afternoon and returned the verdict for the airline about 7 p.m. Friday. Judge Thomas W. Seay presided.

A charge against Mrs. Pruitt of failing to reduce speed to avoid an accident was dismissed in Municipal Court three months after the accident.

The same \$5.5 million aircraft was destroyed in July 1967 when it collided in flight with a small plane shortly after taking off from the Asheville-Hendersonville Airport. Eighty-two people died in the crash.