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Court Grants Preliminary Approval of \$24.4 Million Civil Rights Settlement With John Hancock Life Insurance

Settlement Stems from Suit Alleging Discriminatory Sales Policies to African Americans Through 1959

New Haven, CT (February 11, 2009) -- Late yesterday, United States District Court Judge Janet Bond Arterton granted preliminary approval of a \$24.4 million settlement with John Hancock Life Insurance Company on behalf of African American individuals who are purchasers, owners, insured or beneficiaries of industrial weekly life insurance policies or monthly debit policies by John Hancock prior to 1959.

The case was originally filed in 2003, and focused on practices that allegedly denied African Americans the full range of available life insurance policies. It was alleged to have been carried out in part by Hancock not paying commissions to sales agents for sales to African Americans.

The settlement establishes a class monetary fund of \$24.4 million, plus interest. The settlement calls for a jointly selected Special Master to oversee disbursement of funds to class members who will receive up to \$1,200 per affected policy. Any unused funds will be donated to organizations that predominately benefit African Americans.

Seth Lesser, co lead counsel, said that "We are pleased that the Court took the next step in the process that we expect will ultimately result in welcome relief to the class."

Cyrus Mehri, co lead counsel stated that "This case is a perfect example that the long arc of history bends towards justice. With this outstanding result an important chapter is closed in a way that is fair to both our clients and the Company."

The settlement was achieved as the result of extensive negotiations facilitated by noted Connecticut civil rights attorney Joseph Garrison.

Reporters seeking further information or a copy of the settlement should contact Lee-Ann Foster at lfoster@findjustice.com.

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