

Philip Morris must pay widow 145 million USD: high court

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The US Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed cigarette giant Philip Morris's appeal of a multi-million dollar punitive damage verdict awarded to the widow of a longtime smoker who died of lung cancer.

In a terse, one-sentence ruling, the US high court dismissed the appeal as "improvidently granted," and allowed to stand a decade-old penalty imposed against the company by a jury in the northwestern state of Oregon.

At issue is a 79.5 million dollar judgment upheld by the Oregon high court to widow Mayola Williams, whose late husband Jesse had been a two-pack-a-day smoker of Marlboros cigarette, the premier Philip Morris brand.

Over the years, the US high court has heard three appeals of the 1999 verdict, which in the meantime has ballooned to nearly double the original sum because of compounding interest, and now totals some 145 million dollars.

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