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\$20M NOT ENOUGH FOR EXEC'S EX

Jeane MacIntosh

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Spurned corporate wife Lorna Wendt - who snagged an eye-popping \$20 million in her 1997 divorce from former General Electric CEO Gary Wendt - is going back for more.

A Connecticut Appellate Court yesterday knocked back Wendt's plea to get an additional \$15 million from her husband, who became CEO of Conseco Inc. this summer.

But Lorna Wendt was undaunted, and her lawyers said she'll go to state Supreme Court to get what she wants.

Yesterday, the court unanimously shot down her attempt to get half of her husband's assets, including unvested stock options and supplemental pensions.

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Lawyers for Gary Wendt - who retains assets estimated at more than \$80 million as a result of the ruling - said he is "extremely pleased."

The warring Wendts made headlines in December 1997 when, in a landmark ruling, they were ordered to split all their stocks, cash, bonds, mutual funds and other securities.

Lorna was also awarded half of her husband's estimated pension and vested stock options, \$250,000-a-year alimony, two multimillion-dollar homes and at least \$200,000 in annual stock dividends.

Lorna's take totaled more than \$20 million but, less than a month later, she was back in court looking for \$50 million. Her request was denied.

In April, Lorna's lawyers sought to have her award increased to \$35 million by the Appellate Court.

But in the 28-page ruling that decided the case, Chief Judge William Lavery wrote, "In summation, there is no presumption of an equal property value distribution in Connecticut."

Anju Jessani, a divorce mediator for Hoboken, N.J.-based Divorce With Dignity, said she "wasn't surprised."

"Equitable doesn't mean equal," she said. "It's unfortunate for her, but this is not California, where they divide things 50-50. The question, in states that rule by equitable distribution, is 'how much does she need to live on?'"

The Wendts were married 31 years when, just before Christmas 1995, Gary, as Lorna would later put it, told her she was "being fired as the CEO of the Wendt family."

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