

HERO COP'S DISABILITY BID NIXED

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A former cop whose courage under fire turned her into a national hero says her bravery ruined her life.

Manhattan state Supreme Court Justice Sheila Abdus-Salaam recounted the tragic fall of Arlene Beckles in a decision made public yesterday, saying that while she sympathizes with the retired NYPD detective, she can't help in her bid for accident-disability pay.

Beckles' lawyer, Jeffrey Goldberg, had said the 1994 shootout in a Brooklyn beauty shop that made his client famous "started the downward spiral which affected every facet of her life and disabled her from being a police officer."

Beckles was off-duty and getting her hair done when three gunmen burst into the Salon la Mode in downtown Brooklyn. She pulled out her pistol and shot the three would-be robbers, one fatally. Within days, she was promoted to detective. Mayor Giuliani praised her as a "remarkable officer who saved 20 or 30 lives," and she was honored by President Clinton at the White House.

Less than a year later, the new NYPD poster girl filed for accident-disability retirement, claiming she suffered from back and knee pains. The Police Department's Medical Board, however, found she was physically fit.

In 1996, she was suspended for sick-time abuse. Her anger bubbled over by 1997, and she was checked into the psychiatric ward at St. Vincents Hospital after telling an NYPD shrink "she felt like killing someone in health services . . . [and] would blow the place up."

She eventually went back to work – minus her gun – but got into more trouble in 1998 for sleeping on the job, and was soon found to be psychologically unfit to be a police officer.

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The finding led the pension board to award her ordinary disability instead of accident disability – paying only half her \$55,000 salary.

Goldberg said he'd appeal.
