

Man Dies Because of Doctors' Lack of Urgency

Mr. Doe was 46-years old, and had been a patient of Dr. A, a family practitioner for some time. Dr. A knew a great deal about Mr. Doe's health problems. Mr. Doe was a smoker, obese and had complained of arm and shoulder pain in the past. An EKG was performed, but the results were never communicated to Mr. Doe.

On July 14, 1998, Mr. Doe again complained of arm and shoulder pain. Blood work showed that Mr. Doe's triglycerides were 243 and his cholesterol was 260, and had been abnormal for more than a year. Dr. A referred Mr. Doe to Dr. B, a cardiologist, for a stress test. As a result of this test, Dr. B concluded that Mr. Doe suffered from a variety of serious health problems including an enlarged left ventricle and coronary disease. Dr. B knew this was a high-risk scan and immediately communicated the results to Dr. A. Dr. B said Mr. Doe was at a high risk of having multivessel coronary disease. Dr. B also indicated that Mr. Doe did not know these results because the test "was just done today."

A heart catheterization was scheduled for Aug. 17. It was then rescheduled for Aug. 12. Neither doctors acted as though there was an urgency to the patient's



The Does in February 1998.

well being. In actuality, the condition of Mr. Doe, when Dr. B evaluated him, was a virtual medical emergency.

On Aug. 9, 1998, Mr. Doe suffered a cardiac/respiratory arrest and died. It was clear that if both Dr. A and Dr. B acted appropriately, Mr. Doe would have received the necessary care in a timely fashion, thus preventing his death.

Mrs. Doe retained attorney Earl Denney to handle the case on her behalf and her two children. During discovery, experts on behalf of the plaintiff felt strongly that the defendant doctors were negligent in the care and treatment of Mr. Doe and that their negligence caused his death.

Shortly before trial, the case settled in the amount of \$1.125 million. ■