



## Mother of Three Dies Needlessly From Undiagnosed Ectopic Pregnancy

Late in the evening before Thanksgiving Day, Mrs. X was busy preparing some of her family's favorite recipes for their holiday meal.

Suddenly, Mrs. X began feeling ill, suffering abdominal pain and nausea. As she collapsed to the floor, her husband became alarmed and called for an ambulance to take her to a hospital for urgent attention. In the course of that evening, the family realized that the hospital's response to their arrival included neither urgent nor competent care. The lack of attention was fatal for Mrs. X.

After arriving at the emergency room by ambulance, hospital personnel told Mrs. X that there were no hospital beds available for her, and asked her to get off the ambulance gurney and go sit in the hospital's waiting room. After her family complained about her condition, a room was found and assigned to Mrs. X. However, for the next four hours no further examination or monitoring was performed. Eventually, she was transferred to the Radiology Department for an examination. Mrs. X was in such pain that she could barely lay still for the examination. There was a complete breakdown in communications among the nurses, doctors, and radiology laboratory personnel tending to Mrs. X and, as a result, they failed to detect obvious internal bleeding caused by a ruptured ectopic pregnancy. Mrs. X died of internal bleeding.

Ectopic pregnancy is a leading cause of maternal mortality. Ultrasound examinations, surgery, and other medical procedures can be used to identify and treat ectopic pregnancy and potentially life-threatening ruptures and hemorrhaging. For Mrs. X, a wonderful wife, mother of three, and an active church member, the steps that could have been taken to save her life were denied to her by the hospital's delays and lack of communication. The family of Mrs. X asked SDSBS attorney **Karen Terry** to represent them in a medical malpractice action against the hospital. Prior to trial, the parties reached a substantial seven figure settlement. There will never be, however, a sum of money that would compensate the X family for the needless loss of their wife and mother. ■

## Brenda S. Fulmer



**Brenda Fulmer recently became a shareholder attorney at SDSBS.**

Prior to joining SDSBS, Ms. Fulmer was a partner in Alley, Clark, Greiwe & Fulmer of Tampa, Florida. For the past 14 years, her practice has been focused on plaintiffs' pharmaceutical and medical device mass tort litigation. She represented thousands of claimants in both state and federal courts, and held leadership and committee appointments in various multi-district litigation efforts. She has been involved in a number of national pharmaceutical and medical device mass tort projects, including Digitek, Heparin, pain pumps, AMO Contact Lens Solution, ReNu Contact Lens Solution, Ortho-Evra, hormone replacement therapy, Vioxx, Bextra, Guidant and Medtronic heart devices, Medtronic Sprint Fidelis leads, diet drugs, Baycol, Propulsid, PPA, Sulzer hip and knee implants, Rezulin, and breast implants.

A native of Indiana, Ms. Fulmer graduated from the University of South Florida with a bachelor of science in finance, and received her Juris Doctor degree cum laude from Stetson University College of Law. She served as a Federal Judicial Intern and worked on pro bono projects as a Florida Bar Foundation Public Service Fellow and as an intern with Gulfcoast Legal Services. She has been active with Trial Lawyers Care in providing free legal services for victims of 9/11. She is an active volunteer with the Girl Scouts and with Buddy Break, an organization providing support to autistic and physically-challenged children. ■

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