

Jury awards \$938K in malpractice

SUPERIOR COURT: ST. MARY TO PAY M'VILLE WOMAN'S ESTATE AFTER DEATH

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HAMMOND | When Ronald Creviston's wife of 26 years had to be taken to the hospital due to breathing difficulties, he never imagined she wouldn't be coming home.

"It turned out to be a 21-day nightmare," Creviston said.

A Lake County Superior Court jury on Friday ruled in his favor that his wife, Margaret Creviston, 55, had died due to medical malpractice.

The jury ruled against St. Mary Medical Center in Hobart, where Margaret Creviston had been a patient, and awarded her estate \$938,000, according to Creviston's Merrillville-based attorney David Holub.

"I feel a little closure. What happened to my wife was a terrible thing. At least she has some retribution as to what happened. The whole family has closure," Ronald Creviston said.

Holub said Margaret Creviston, who had emphysema, was taken to St. Mary Medical Center because she had difficulty breathing.

The Crevistons at that time lived in Merrillville but Ronald Creviston said he has since moved to Griffith.

Once at the hospital, Margaret Creviston also suffered from a mild heart attack but her condition was improving so much in the intensive care unit her breathing tube was removed, Holub said.

Shortly after the tube's removal, a nurse noticed there was bleeding around Creviston's mouth but didn't take any action. A second nurse, also observed blood inside her patient's mouth as well as blood pooled on the pillow.

That blood had also traveled down into both her stomach and lungs, Holub said.

"It only became known a few days later that her partial dentures had been lodged deep inside her throat," he said.

A series of complications followed — including a loss of two liters of blood — and on Nov. 7, 2001, Creviston died after one of her lungs had been punctured by an IV, he said.

"There's always a danger of puncturing a lung -- that's not malpractice. But it's not finding those dentures in the first place and letting them fall into the patient's mouth," Holub said.

Margaret Creviston, the mother of three and grandmother of seven, had worked at a mortgage loan business and sold real estate about a year before her death, Ronald Creviston said.

"She was the matriarch of the family and always a good listener. Her death was quite a loss to our children and grandchildren," Creviston said.