

# Jury Awards Widow \$99,000

## Two Cardiologists Sued

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An Albuquerque woman has won a \$99,000 jury award in a medical malpractice lawsuit arising from the 1993 death of her husband after a heart attack.

Medical malpractice cases in state District Court in Albuquerque infrequently go to trial, and, when they do, juries rarely find for the plaintiffs.

Nancy Turpie alleged in her 1994 lawsuit that the negligence of two cardiologists, Drs. Charles Karaian and Robert Dubroff, in the diagnosis and treatment of Hugh Turpie after he had a heart attack ultimately caused his death.

Presbyterian Healthcare Services Inc., originally a defendant, settled with Turpie before trial. Turpie's attorney, Carl Bettinger, said the amount is confidential under terms of the settlement but "we were pleased with it."

A state District Court jury returned its verdict late last week after deliberating for two days at the end of a six-day trial before Judge Daniel Schneider.

"We're very gratified for the time and attention the jury devoted to the case," Bettinger said after the verdict.

"The case involved two good cardiologists who made a series of bad decisions that we believe caused Hugh Turpie's death, and it also involved a very courageous wife who wanted to bring it all to life so it didn't happen to someone else."

Defense attorney Gregory Chase said he will talk to his clients and do legal research before deciding whether to appeal.

Nancy Turpie alleged the physicians failed to properly diagnose and treat her husband, 62, after he was hospitalized June 18, 1993, with "crushing chest pain." He died July 7, 1993.

Initially, the verdict confused Schneider and the attorneys because of the jury's seemingly contradictory answers to certain written verdict questions.

Bettinger said attorneys learned from jurors that the jury believed that not doing alternative tests on Turpie was acceptable but not allowing the Turpies to participate in the decision was unacceptable.