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Lawsuit Settled for \$950,000 against University of Chicago Hospital and Dr. Jeffrey A. Leef for Wrongful Death of Chicago Woman

October 3, 2007-Chicago—John J. Perconti, of the Chicago law firm, Levin & Perconti, settled a lawsuit for \$950,000 on behalf of Joseph Smith (Chicago), for the wrongful death of his mother, Vera Smith (Chicago), against University of Chicago and radiologist Dr. Jeffrey E. Leef. The settlement was approved by Judge Diane Larsen of the Circuit Court of Cook County.

70-year-old Vera Smith was an active and independent woman. She enjoyed spending time with her son, Joseph Smith, and her daughter, Betty McCrory (Chicago) and her six grandchildren. Family members took turns hosting their ritual Sunday dinners. Vera always looked forward to her turn to cook a meal for her children and grandchildren.

Joseph and Betty were proud of their mother's involvement in her church and community. Vera never missed a Sunday service and was the President of the Usher Board at Pentecostal Church (Chicago). Her pastor and fellow congregation members were amongst her closest friends.

On October 31, 2003, Vera wasn't feeling well. She was experiencing swelling in her upper right arm and face. This wasn't completely unusual since Vera was a diabetic. She was accustomed to occasional swelling in her right arm where the catheter for delivering insulin was located. Vera was taken to University of Chicago Hospital where she was admitted to undergo a series of tests to determine the cause of the swelling. Her children and grandchildren took turns visiting her.

On November 7, 2003, Vera's children were told that doctors suspected a possible abnormal connection between Vera's arteries and veins. In order to investigate, doctors recommended that Vera undergo an interventional radiological procedure involving placing a catheter into Vera's artery to look for and clear any blockages.

Attorney John Perconti explained how the family was alerted to the fact that something went wrong during the procedure: "Joseph recalls the hospital calling to inform him that there was a complication with the procedure. He was told that his mother was bleeding internally and that her blood pressure had dropped. When he and his sister arrived at the hospital they were shocked to learn their mother had died. They had just spoken to her the day before and she was looking forward to going home," said Perconti.

After an autopsy was performed, Joseph and Betty learned that Dr. Jeffrey Leef, the radiologist who performed the procedure, had perforated Ms. Smith's right ventricle (the lower right chamber of the heart) which caused internal bleeding and death on November 7, 2003.

Perconti concluded, "It is unfortunate and sad that Vera had to die from a relatively simple and non-invasive procedure. Vera was leading a full and active life. Vera and her children never got a chance to say goodbye to one another".