

Patient death lawsuit settled

The widow of a 58-year-old man who died following heart surgery was awarded \$550,000 in the settlement of a lawsuit against Mobile Infirmary.

The trial had been scheduled to start this week in Mobile County Circuit Court, but a settlement was reached before the trial began in Judge Robert Byrd's courtroom.

Richard Bounds, the attorney for Mary Lou Sherrer, said Herbert Fred Sherrer underwent heart surgery on April 18, 1984. Bounds said the surgery was successful, but Sherrer did not wake up after the operation and tests showed he had suffered massive brain damage resulting from complications which caused his death 11 days later.

Bounds said the plaintiffs claimed the hospital was negligent because a student perfusion technician who was operating a heart-lung machine Sherrer was on during surgery "permitted the blood level in the oxygenator reservoir to get too low, permitting air to be pumped into Sherrer's cerebral arteries." The student was being supervised by an employee of the hospital, Bounds said.