

## **Jury awards \$4.5 million in medical case**

A jury has awarded \$4.5 million to the widower of a woman who died after an endotracheal tube was inserted in the wrong place.

The Mobile County jury's verdict came after a seven-day trial before Judge Douglas Johnstone.

The judgment was awarded to Woodrow Smith. His wife, 49-year-old Annie Jo Smith, was admitted to Knollwood Park Hospital in September 1989 following a head-on collision. The judgment was against Dr. William Schulte and Pulmonary Associates of Mobile PA.

Before the jury began its deliberations, Johnstone directed a verdict in favor of Knollwood Hospital.

Andrew Clausen, the hospital's attorney, said the judge determined there was "no substantial evidence to suggest the patient's death resulted from any act or omission on the part of the hospital or hospital personnel."

Mike Worel, one of Smith's attorneys, said two days after the accident, the woman developed respiratory problems and an endotracheal tube was used to help her breathe. He said testimony during the trial showed the tube was placed down the esophagus instead of the trachea.

Worel said testimony showed the pulmonologist should have listened to the woman's lungs and stomach for air, which would have indicated the tube was in the proper place.

He said in this case, the doctor did not do that and the woman eventually went into cardiac arrest, suffered brain damage and died.