



Gets 18M for hosp mistakes

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For the first five years of her son Ivan's life, Mamie Ward did not know her child suffered from cerebral palsy.

Nearly five more years passed before she learned that Ivan's condition was caused by medical personnel who botched his delivery then covered up their mistakes.

A Brooklyn jury has awarded Ivan, 22, who is uses a wheelchair, nearly \$18 million in a negligence suit brought against the former Brooklyn Jewish Hospital, now called Interfaith Medical Center.

The award was made in the civil division of Brooklyn Supreme Court last Friday. It is still subject to review by presiding Justice Joseph Levine, who can reduce the amount.

Although Brooklyn Jewish is defunct, its insurer is liable for payment and indications are that an appeal would be forthcoming.

Mom in the dark

"I never had any idea there was anything wrong with him," said Ward, 57. "He was about 5 years old and having trouble walking, so I took him for orthopedic shoes. The lady in the store told me he doesn't need shoes. He needs to see a doctor."

She contends that throughout her pregnancy and following Ivan's birth on Aug. 6, 1971, doctors at Brooklyn Jewish never told her there was a problem.

In 1982, Ward filed suit in Brooklyn Supreme Court, about the same time Brooklyn Jewish Hospital went into receivership and merged with St. John's Hospital to become Interfaith.

Ward, who testified at the three-week trial, said it wasn't until the court proceedings that she learned the full story of what the hospital had done.

A mother's tears

"I cried when I heard what they had done," she said. "It hurt my heart to listen to how they hurt my baby and hearing what they did with the records."

The problems began on Aug. 5, 1971, when an already hospitalized Ward began bleeding. "I started to bleed, but they didn't take the baby right away. They took me upstairs and I began to hemorrhage, but they still didn't take the baby," she said.

Records destroyed

Ward's attorney, Thomas Moore, says the hospital waited nearly 17 hours before delivering Ivan by Caesarian section, then covered up the mistake.

Moore contends that Ivan's cerebral palsy is the result of the botched birth, noting that none of Ward's three other children are afflicted with the ailment. "The hospital attempted to keep this case silent forever by destroying medical records," said Moore.

A somber Ward said, "It hurts ... I have to care for (Ivan) like a baby."

The jury award will help with her son's care, she said, "but it can never pay for what they did."