



Farmington Observer

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Farmington FOCUS

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FARMINGTON Hills resident Clifford Culham Jr., who died of Lou Gehrig's disease, which attacks nerve cells that control muscle movement, included in his will that he be removed from artificial life support systems if there was no hope for a decent life.

After Oakland County Circuit Judge David Breck granted legal immunity Dec. 15, a Birmingham physician disconnected the 57-year-old man's life-sustaining ventilator and feeding tubes three days later.

Culham had sought disconnection for a year so he could die "in dignity and in comfort," as Breck put it. Such a request through a will isn't binding. But Breck told Channel 7 newscaster Bill Bonds Dec. 16, "It's certainly helpful."

Breck, who visited Culham in his Ohio nursing home room to assure he understood the ramifications of his request, added that Culham's will "gave me even more credence to his wishes."

BACK on board. The Farmington Hills City Council reappointed three residents Dec. 21 to the assessor's residential board of review. Dorothy Jeffries, George Doom and Gordon Meyers accepted assessor Dean Babb's reappointment offer of one-, two- and three-year terms, respectively.

FOOTNOTES: One year ago this week — Farmington Hills' San Marino Golf Course and Recreational Maintenance Center has received an Award of Merit from the Park Maintenance and Grounds Management magazine for its efficiency and attractiveness.

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May a peaceful, prosperous, healthy and happy year be yours.

THE Observer & Eccentric NEWSPAPERS

Botsford raps mortality ratings

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Botsford Hospital officials are concerned about public reaction, particularly among the elderly, to a federal report showing the hospital's 18 percent mortality rate among Medicare patients was higher than expected for 1986.

"We're really concerned that what's been reported won't cause undue concern among our patients," said Dr. Kenneth Gliner, Botsford medical director. "We are concerned

that the elderly — the majority of Medicare patients — may misinterpret the study."

Botsford officials join other top medical leaders who are critical of a mortality rate study by the Health Care Financing Administration, the federal agency that administers the Medicare program.

The Farmington Hills hospital was one of nine Michigan hospitals ranked in the study as having more than expected deaths among Medicare patients in 1986. The agency studied almost 6,000 hospitals na-

tionally, 197 of which are in Michigan.

Botsford was the only Oakland County hospital among the nine ranked for higher than expected number of deaths. The study listed the Strath Memorial Hospital in Southfield as having no deaths. Strath specializes in cosmetic and therapeutic surgery.

BASED ON 1,928 Medicare patients at Botsford, the federal study listed the hospital's mortality rate at about 18 percent, compared to "a

predicted range of 10-17 percent."

"I can't argue with the numbers provided in the study," Gliner said about the death rate statistics. "But I can disagree with their interpretation."

The study needs "considerable refinement" before it can be considered accurate, according to a written response submitted by Botsford.

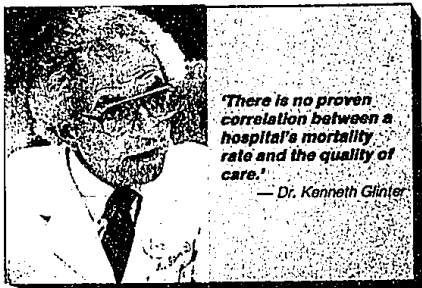
"The release of this kind of data now creates a lot of smoke, creates a lot of controversy (and) raises a lot of doubt in the public mind for really no good public purpose," agreed

Spencer Johnson, president of the Michigan Hospital Association.

Gliner said he is worried that the public and the federal agency believe mortality rates and quality of care are related.

"Mortality rates are absolutely, positively, no indication of quality of care. There is no proven correlation between a hospital's mortality rate and the quality of care," Gliner said.

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'There is no proven correlation between a hospital's mortality rate and the quality of care.'
— Dr. Kenneth Gliner

Hospital answers report

By Joanne Maliszewski staff writer

Botsford General Hospital officials believe a federal study of mortality rates at hospitals serving Medicare patients has some serious flaws and weaknesses.

The Health Care Financing Administration study, Botsford officials maintain, neglects certain factors that would further explain the death rates of Medicare patients at the Farmington Hills-based hospital.

The recently released report shows that Botsford has a mortality rate among Medicare patients of

about 18 percent, slightly above the predicted rate of 10-17 percent.

Of greatest concern to hospital officials is that the study will be interpreted as a guide or measurement of hospital and care quality. In order for the study to be used in that manner, officials said, considerable refinement in the methods used in the study is required.

"There is no way that the quality of health care should be equated with the mortality rate," said Dr. Kenneth Gliner, medical director.

Gliner is concerned that patients, particularly the elderly, will interpret the study to mean that those

hospitals with higher than expected mortality rates for Medicare patients are not providing quality care.

The medical director said that's untrue because many factors play a part in determining whether a hospital is providing good care. And that's the quagmire that Gliner has with the federal study.

GLINTER AND Marilyn Kuncz Botsford medical records administrator, maintain that the study neglects factors such as patient age, stage of illness, referrals from other

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Moving on

LAURA CASTLE/staff photographer

All that was missing was some traveling music when this silhouetted dancer pranced out of town earlier this week. David Shein of the Hacker Sign Studio in Detroit is removing the sign from the Busher School of Dance Arts on Grand River Avenue in downtown Farmington.

Seeking answers

Racist vandals spark response

By Casey Hans staff writer

An outpouring of sympathy and support has come from the Farmington community for a biracial couple whose home was vandalized during the holidays.

Derwin Success said he has received "tremendous support" from the community. Many people, mostly strangers, have sent flowers, brought food and offered to help clean the exterior walls of his house where racial slurs were painted several days before Christmas.

Also, the head of a local community group addressing cultural awareness will discuss the incident at its meeting next week. The group will also try to determine ways to help in the future.

Derwin Success, who is black, and Dianna Success, who is white, also had windows broken at their Farmington home last week. They have lived there for the past two years with three children from Dianna's previous marriage.

Farmington police officials said there are no suspects in the case. They have received only one unsubstantiated tip regarding the property damage, according to Gary Goss, deputy public safety director.

As insurance adjusters assessed damage at the Slauswaez Street Tuesday, Derwin Success said the couple was attempting to get additional community support for a Cultural Day for the Farmington area. Success pictures an annual event where several hundred chil-

dren of different racial and ethnic backgrounds could gather and get to know each other.

THE COUPLE works together in a motivational counseling business for young people. He says they are determined to help in efforts to bring ethnic harmony to the Farmington area.

There have been efforts throughout the Farmington and Farmington Hills area during the past year to develop cultural and ethnic harmony.

The Cultural Awareness Committee, composed of members of the community was recently reactivated, and is meeting monthly to discuss cultural and ethnic topics.

Discussing the Success' situation

"is a must," according to Jim Agnew, newly elected chairman of the group and a Farmington Hills resident.

"This was our whole emphasis — to try to provide an atmosphere so something like that would not happen."

Agnew called the incident a "throwback" to years past. He hopes to get input from other committee members at the group's next regular meeting scheduled for Wednesday evening.

Another member of the committee said he had invited Derwin Success to next week's meeting. Success said he would welcome any type of community support.

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Rights complaint keeps party rolling

It took the help of the Michigan Department of Civil Rights for a skate-dance performance and holiday skating party to go on as scheduled Tuesday evening at the Bonaventure Skating Center in Farmington Hills.

"It appeared the owner of the roller rink wanted to back out (of the scheduled party), that was the thing we attempted to deal with," said Edward Chastang, director of the civil rights department's enforcement bureau.

Noah Murphy, 28, filed a com-

plaint Dec. 1 with the state Civil Rights Department to ensure that his skating party would take place despite efforts by Bonaventure owner Louis Armbruster to back out of the rink reservation. Chastang said, Murphy and his skate-dancing partner, Crystal Brown, 22, could not be reached for comment.

Until the investigation is complete, Chastang said he was unable to provide details on the reason why Murphy filed a complaint when

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Eventful year comes to a close

□ The year reviewed in pictures, 1B; a look back at sports, 1C.

By Casey Hans and Joanne Maliszewski staff writers

FROM COCAINE trials and murders, to concern over child care, education, and other community issues, 1987 has brought joy to some and pain to others.

The Observer staff has covered a variety of stories, twice each week, giving readers a taste of their community and keeping them abreast of the news that affects them. Following is a selection from our files of the top issues covered during 1987:

● JANUARY

Disruptive acts by teenagers along the Orchard Lake corridor in Farmington Hills made the headlines throughout January as police, teens, their parents, and members of the business community met to discuss problems and their possible solutions. It also led to a media blitz by radio and television stations, a movie applauded by some parents who wanted to shed light on the problem but decry by Hills police chief William Dwyer as a "circus."

Much of the fighting and destruction was deemed to be ethnic in origin, Dwyer said. The problems prompted the formation of several community groups to discuss the area's cultural diversity, and to determine how a better understanding could be developed.

● FEBRUARY

Word that the Farmington school district was considering a centralized kindergarten program caused several hundred parents to organize and protest the move. More than 300 attended a school board study session to debate the issue, with many speaking out against a centralized program for the district.

The protest prompted the district to offer only an optional centralized program this year at its two early childhood centers. About 70 children attend.

● MARCH

Murder and attempted murder were in the news in March. The 61-year-old chauffeur of a resident of the Hunters Ridge Apartments in Farmington Hills was fatally shot and robbed of \$450. Three

Detroit residents were arrested and charged with murder and related counts for the north side incident.

Also in March, Farmington resident Paul Dober, then 19, was found guilty in Oakland County Circuit Court of shooting a security guard at the Putt 'N' Games arcade on Grand River in Farmington Hills. A new trial is pending for Dober in 1988 because of an omission in the court records.

● APRIL

Parents from the West Bloomfield Township whose children attend Farmington schools spoke out about proposed boundary changes in the high schools that would affect their area. About 83 students at Warner Middle School were given a one-time choice of attending Harrison or North Farmington before permanent

boundary changes go into effect.

At the end of 1987 all Farmington school boundaries are again in question. In a community panel gathering and facility changes at all grade levels for fall 1988. Their proposals are expected to be detailed at a Jan. 19 school board meeting.

● MAY

A long-time Farmington resident and middle school teacher in the Bloomfield Hills school district, David Michael Schultz, 35, was sentenced to 10 years without parole at Southern Michigan Prison at Jackson for delivering 10 ounces of cocaine to a Farmington house shortly before a drug raid. His case remains on appeal.

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