

# Tension heightens in and out of court

BY PAT MURPHY  
STAFF WRITER

As the trial of Dr. Jack Kevorkian enters its third week, stress is starting to surface... in the courtroom as well as in the hallways.

Throughout the trial, defense attorney Geoffrey N. Fieger and Oakland County assistant prosecutor John Skrzynski have traded barbs and borderline insults. Furthermore, each side has voiced criticism of the court system, with the defense railing against the court of appeals and the prosecution filing four separate appeals, including one suggesting that Judge Jessica R. Cooper be replaced.

But the stress — or perhaps the heat of legal battle — seemed particularly obvious Friday with the defense accusing the prosecution of telling "lies" to the court, and Skrzynski advising Fieger to go back to law school and "take another course" on what constitutes hearsay evidence.

In between addressing more than 20 objections, sometimes like a judge addressing professional lawyers and other times like a mother scolding children, "Enough, gentlemen, enough," Cooper said at one point. "Several times, as Fieger and Skrzynski were arguing with each other, the judge admonished them to 'calm down.'"

"Is everybody through yelling at each other?" Cooper asked.

On one occasion, the banner reached a point at which the judge instructed the jury to leave the courtroom. "We're having a very irascible morning," she said apologetically.

Fieger showed definite signs of stress Thursday morning when he

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berated a CBS correspondent because of a question the attorney thought was inappropriate.

When Dr. Stanley Levy was testifying, Cooper instructed Fieger to rephrase a question. When the attorney didn't rephrase the question to her satisfaction, Cooper asked the question directly.

"Did it embarrass you to have a judge ask a question?" the CBS correspondent asked Fieger during a break. Fieger didn't seem miffed at the time, and if he responded it wasn't readily audible.

But a few moments later, Fieger came back. "Does it embarrass you that I don't know your name?" he asked loudly, with a few expletives for emphasis, "That you're such a nobody?"

Dozens of reporters, photographers and fly-busters were taken back by Fieger's anger, which was usually directed at the prosecution.

The CBS correspondent, Terry Phillips, seemed taken back. But he remained unshaken.

"I've been yelled at by bigger snobs," said Phillips, who was recently reassigned from CBS News in Moscow.

# Kevorkian from page 1A

Prosecutors, however, maintained the pair didn't need to die and chose Kevorkian because they were depressed. "There were other ways to relieve pain and depression," assistant prosecutor Greg Townsend said. "There were other options available, and they should have been pursued."

Earlier in the week, Dr. Eric M. Chelevin, testified that Khalili, a Chicago area physician, had not received adequate advice on managing his pain or handling the depression resulting from the bone cancer he knew would eventually take his life.

Khalili, and presumably Frederick, had other ways to end their suffering without ending their lives," said Chelevin, a Youngstown, Ohio, specialist who is active with anti-euthanasia organizations.

Dr. Stanley H. Levy, however, contradicted that opinion. Levy is a specialist in internal medicine who has an office in Southfield and is the medical director for a nursing home in West Bloomfield.

He's also active in "Physicians for Mercy," a group that advocates physician assisted suicide



Janet Good

as a merciful alternative to incurable suffering.

Levy, who has also been the Fieger family physician, testified he did not know Khalili personally. But medical records indicate Khalili, a faculty member at Northwestern University, had been to the Mayo Clinic and had given some of the "best physicians in the world."

Khalili also had a pump with which he injected morphine into



Dr. Stanley Levy

his body, Levy said. He could have injected a higher dosage, the physician said, but it would likely have rendered Khalili unconscious.

Also testifying Friday was Janet Good, the founder and past president of Hemlock of Michigan.

The Farmington Hills woman has told newspapers outside the courtroom she has been diagnosed as having fatal pancreatic

cancer. She also told newspapers she will likely seek Kevorkian's help in ending her agony if the pain for her cancer becomes unbearable.

On the witness stand, Good described herself as a practicing Catholic who is active in Our Lady of Sorrows Church in Farmington Hills. She's also in the Michigan Woman's Hall of Fame for, among other things, fighting sexual harassment in the workplace.

Good said her phone number is listed in the Hemlock national magazine and she has received "hundreds of phone calls" from people wanting to talk with Kevorkian.

"They never say they want to die," Good testified. "They say they want to end their pain and suffering. Sometimes, to my chagrin, Dr. Kevorkian turned them down. He said they weren't ready."

Good said she has known Kevorkian for about six years and considers him to be a brilliant and compassionate man. "I wish more physicians were as compassionate as he is," she said.

# Proposal A complicates assessment forms

**■ Property owners who wish to dispute the values established by the Assessor's Office can appeal to the board of review. For an appointment to appear before the board of review, call the Assessor's Office before March 13.**

The assessment notices are in the mail, if not already in residents' mailboxes, according to Dean E. Bahb, Farmington Hills city assessor.

Hills assessment notices are different and more complicated than the old postcard form. The changes are the result of Proposal A, according to Bahb.

For most homestead property owners, the number of primary interest on the new assessment notice will be the 1996 taxable value. That value multiplied by the local millage rate will give the property tax.

The State Equalized Value (SEV) which was the taxable value prior to Proposal A is still calculated and homeowners are notified of that figure on this assess-

ment notice. The average SEV changed by 4 percent this year.

However, Proposal A caps the value to be used for computing 1996 property taxes at the 1995 taxable value multiplied by the Consumer's Price Index (CPI). This year's CPI is 2.8 percent. The "capped value" also reflects any physical changes made to the property in the previous year.

If there was a transfer of owner-

ship on the property in 1995, the 1996 taxable value will be the same as the 1996 State Equalized Value. If residents know of a transfer of ownership on your property in 1995 and this is not reflected on this year's assessment notice, it is important to contact the Assessor's Office immediately.

Because the SEV will generally be higher than the taxable value, an incorrect recording of taxable

value will result in a bill for back taxes and assessments to the date of the transfer when the transfer is recorded.

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The board will meet March 11, 12 and 13 to hear protests. It will also accept letter protests received by March 13.

Cases of financial hardship will also be considered by the board. Taxpayers who received a reduction last year have already been mailed the request forms. Others may request forms prior to March 13.

# State offers workshops for art grants

Nonprofit arts and cultural groups can learn how to apply for state grants during workshops this month.

The Department of Commerce said the workshops will be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., with an hour break for lunch, on:

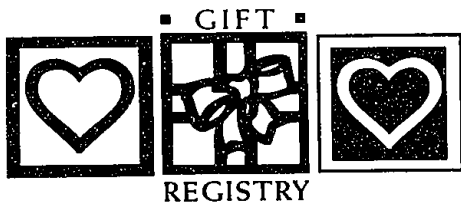
■ Wednesday, March 13, in the

New Center at 110 N. Main, Ann Arbor. Contact person for enrollment is Marilyn Diabrow at (313) 998-0160.

■ Thursday, March 14, in 115 of the Southfield Civic Center, 26000 Evergreen, Southfield. Contact is Marlowe Belanger at (810) 424-9034.

Others are scheduled for Lansing and outstate cities.

"Good proposal writing does not guarantee success, but is only one aspect of good grantmanship," said Betty Boone, executive director of the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.



**BRADA  
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