

Assaults alleged

By Pat Murphy staff writer

Were grand jury witnesses called to answer questions about the role of Dr. Jack Kevorkian and the latest physician-assisted suicides physically assaulted or not?

That's the underlying question in the latest flare-up in the dispute between the lawyer for the so-called Doctor Death and Oakland County prosecutor's office.

Kevorkian's attorney Geoffrey N. Fieger claims two witnesses who support the physician's advocacy of physician-assisted suicides were physically "slammed" or "pinned" against the wall Tuesday morning at the offices of Oakland County prosecutor Richard Thompson.

THE TWO were also placed under arrest, Fieger said, when they wanted to leave the prosecutor's office.

Not so, said Assistant Prosecutor Larry Bunting, head of the grand jury looking into the Oct. 23 deaths of Sherry A. Miller and Marjorie Wantz. Miller and Wantz died in the presence of Kevorkian and others at Bald Eagle Recreation Area in Oakland Township.

"Nobody was touched," Bunting said Wednesday. "Nobody was placed under arrest."

THE DISPUTED confrontation occurred about 10 a.m. at the prosecutor's office on Elizabeth Lake Road where the two women had been subpoenaed to testify before the grand jury. Kevorkian appeared Monday but again declined to testify without first being granted immunity.

At a press conference in Fieger's Southfield office four hours after the Tuesday confrontation, the attorney and the two witnesses gave their account of the altercation.

"Several large men who work for Richard Thompson shoved me against a wall and arrested me," Nelson said.

"I was assaulted today by Prosecutor Richard Thompson's staff," said Walsh. "I was terrified and intimidated."

FIEGER SAID he is "shocked, saddened and outraged by the vicious and unprovoked assaults." He said he holds Thompson personally responsible, although he was not present at the time.

Fieger said he filed a complaint with the sheriff's office and called on the prosecutor to take swift disciplinary action against the people who mishandled his clients.

Fieger and the two witnesses said as many as 10 "burly" assistant prosecutors or police officers were involved in the incident, although just one or two actually touched his clients.

FIEGER SAID he thinks the confrontation occurred because the women wanted him to represent them — and he present — when they appeared before the grand jury. Both women agreed.

Bunting, while denying anybody was manhandled or arrested, agrees there was "a lot of commotion."

"But the cause was Fieger," he said. "He was out of control... shouting and yelling."

Bunting said an order signed by Richard D. Rubin, presiding judge of the Oakland Circuit Court, prohibits Fieger's continuing to represent the two women.

"WE TRIED to tell the women they had to get another lawyer," Bunting said, "and Fieger went crazy."

Crake 'welcomes' bank probe

By Pat Murphy staff writer

The newly elected chairman of the Oakland County Board of Commissioners says he welcomes any investigation into his role in the collapse last fall of the First Federal Savings Bank and Trust of Pontiac.

"I'll cooperate fully. I'll answer any questions," said Larry Crake, R-Waterford. "But so far, nobody's talked to me, nobody's asked me any questions."

Crake made his comments Tuesday in the wake of a story in The Detroit News saying federal banking authorities are investigating him and other bank officials.

"They (federal authorities) will talk to all directors, all stockholders and all officers," Crake said. "When they talk with me, I'll answer to the best of my ability. I have nothing to hide."

Crake, owner of the 300 Bowl on Cass Lake Road in Waterford, became a director at the bank in 1981, and resigned about six months before First Federal was seized in October by the Resolution Trust Corporation (RTC) because of multimillion dollar losses.

Crake SAID HE is not surprised by the investigation or by the prospect of being questioned by federal regulators. "But I am surprised about The News singling me out."

"I couldn't answer questions (from the reporter). But I will certainly cooperate with investigators," he said.

Crake is in his third term as a county commissioner. Last week he was elected to replace resigning commissioner Roy Howald, R-Oakland Township, as head of the county board.

"I was a bank director the same way I am a county commissioner," Crake said. "I work hard and I do the best I can."

The Detroit News article about Crake is under investigation for its involvement in transactions of a bank while he was a director of the bank.

The newspaper quoted an unnamed federal official as saying one of Crake's actions — vowing to approve a loan to a business partner — could be compared with action that led to conflict of interest charges against Neil Bush, the son of President Bush, in the 1988 failure of a Colorado thrift.

The Detroit News also said investigators are looking at Crake's role in other transactions, including approvals of loans, possibly involving up to \$1 million, to Crake and a relative.

Hospice group holds volunteer training

Cranbrook Hospice Care needs area residents to participate in their winter volunteer training sessions, scheduled to begin next week.

Volunteers are vital to Cranbrook Hospice Care's comprehensive in-home program dedicated to allowing individuals to live their final months or days pain-free, with quality, dignity and comfort.

For the past 11 years, Cranbrook Hospice Care has used a holistic multi-disciplinary approach to meeting the physical, emotional, spiritual and social needs of patients and families. The team consists of doctors, nurses, social workers, home health aides, clergy and volunteers.

Volunteers are trained and professionally supervised as they provide direct care, respite and support for family members, bereavement care and all types of program and staff support. Additional volunteer opportunities exist in fund-raising, newsletter publication, public relations and a speakers bureau.

Volunteer Orientation Sessions have been scheduled 6-9 p.m. Monday, Jan. 13, and from 9 a.m. to noon Tuesday, Jan. 14. They will be held at the Cranbrook Hospice Care office at 2355 Crooks Road, Troy, just south of Big Beaver.

A monthlong training program will follow. For further information, or to register for training, please call Nancy McHugh at 643-8855.

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