

# S'fld firm not charging for defense

By Pat Murphy  
staff writer

So far, the medical and legal costs involved in the assisted suicide issue have been quite reasonable, according to Geoffrey N. Fleger, the lawyer for the retired Royal Oak pathologist known as "Doctor Death."

None of the families involved in the three assisted suicides have received a physician's billing from Dr. Jack Kevorkian, Fleger said Monday at the conclusion of a three-day hearing on murder charges against the physician.

"And we (the Southfield firm of Fleger, Fleger & Schwartz) are taking the case pro bono," he said.

He was referring to the Latin phrase defined in Black's Law Dictionary as meaning "for the good," meaning work or services done without charge.

Fleger refused to allow Kevorkian to speak for himself about any medical fees to the families of Janet Ad-

kins of Portland, Ore., Marjorie Wantz of the Benton Harbor area or Sherry Miller of Roseville. "I'll answer all those questions," he said. "None of those families got a bill from Dr. Kevorkian," Fleger said. "He has offered his services because he believes in the issue of assisted suicide."

AS FOR LEGAL EXPENSES involved in hours of preparation and court time on behalf of Kevorkian, Fleger said he believes there is an issue pertaining to a public good — one he strongly supports.

"So, we're doing it pro bono," Fleger said.

Asked if that is simply a lawyer's way of saying the client will get the bill later, Fleger said, "I stand by my statement . . . we're taking the case pro bono."

That's a sharp contrast to what it's costing taxpayers to prosecute Kevorkian, Fleger said. "I bet it's cost more than a million dollars to

prosecute a physician performing an act of mercy."

While the entire case is unnecessary, according to the defense lawyer, the financial waste was particularly evident in the expense related to an expert witness whose testimony was not allowed.

Arthur L. Caplan, a faculty member at the University of Minnesota who specializes in medical ethics, was flown into Rochester District Court Monday morning.

But Judge James P. Sheehy refused to allow him to testify. Anything the ethics specialist said would be irrelevant to the case at hand, he said, regardless of merit.

"He's a philosopher," Sheehy said. "If we got 18 different philosophers, we might get 18 different opinions."

A companion, Chris McCroly, also from Redford, said he too benefited from watching the proceedings. He previously supported Kevorkian, McCroly said, but after hearing testimony that conviction is much stronger, he said.

judge might not allow Caplan to testify, said Bunting. It was a calculated decision.

Asked to estimate how much money it cost to bring Caplan to Rochester Hills, Bunting said, "About \$800."

While she didn't talk about expenses related to the Kevorkian case, one of the many spectators at the three-day hearing said her time was well spent.

"I definitely learned a lot," said Kathleen Joyce of Redford Township, who is a student at Oakland Community College. "It was well worth the time."

Joyce said she was not sympathetic to Kevorkian's position before the hearing. "But I understand things a lot more now."

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## Addiction expert at OCC workshop

Patrick T. Carnes, a nationally known authority on addiction and recovery issues, will appear in the February Conference, a lecture/workshop series to be held at 7:30 p.m. today and 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday at Oakland Community College's Itoyal Oak Campus.

Presented by the OCC Community Awareness Institute, the event will take place in the Lila R. Jones Johnson Auditorium.

The conference begins at 7:30 p.m. tonight, with Carnes' lecture "Contrary to Love: Sexual Challenges for Recovering People". Among the topics he will cover are the addictive disorders of alcoholism, eating and sexual addiction, as well as co-dependency and adult children issues. Carnes will share practical and positive information on renewing relationships and our sexual selves. Admission to the lecture is \$10, at the door.

From 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday

Carnes will conduct a training workshop entitled "Silent Shame: The Path to Addictive Behavior." Designed for people helping those who come from sexually addicted families, as well as those involved in addictive relationships, the workshop covers a wide range of topics including origins of addiction, the cost of addiction and the recovery process. Continuing Education Units credits are available.

Advanced registration admission rates for the Friday workshop at \$35 for students, \$45 for the general public (add \$10 after Feb. 16, or at the door).

The Royal Oak Campus is located on the north side of Lincoln Avenue (10 1/2 Mile) between Washington and Main Streets. Free parking is available.

For further information and a program brochure, contact Marilyn Owens, conference coordinator at 340-6772.

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