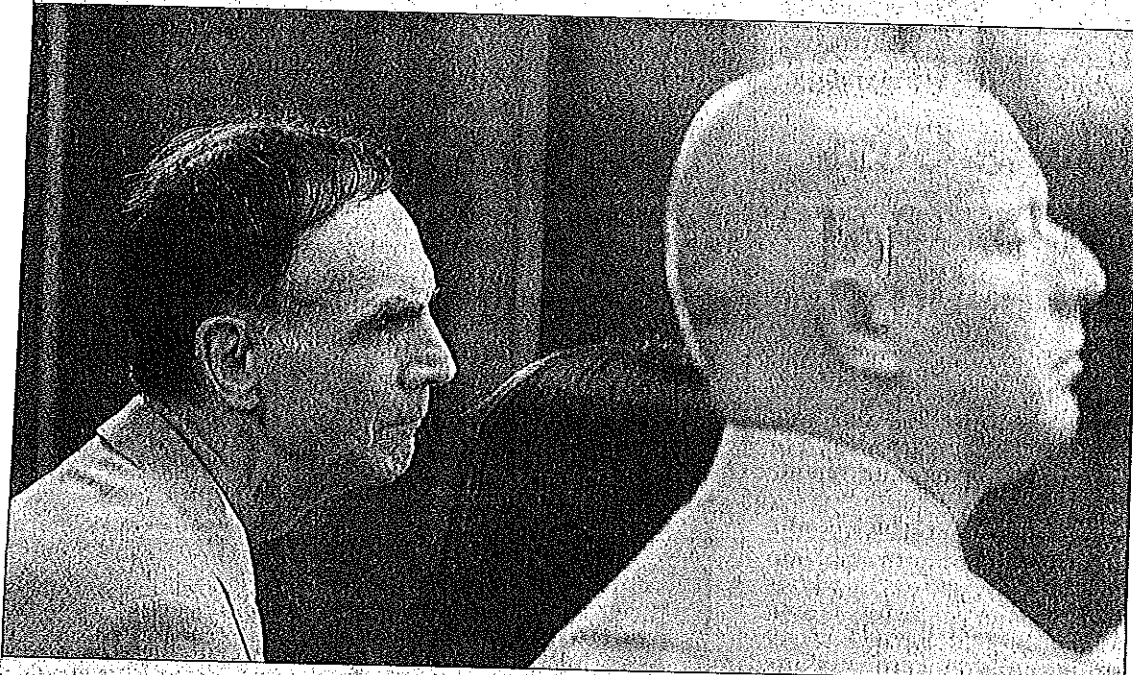


# Bayonne widower targets doc in malpractice suit



REENA ROSE SIBAYAN JOURNAL PHOTOS

VINCENT VIDA, left, whose wife Cecille died in 2006, watches the videotaped deposition of Dr. Margaret Engel, below, that was played during her trial yesterday at Hudson County Superior Court in Jersey City.

By MICHAELANGELO CONTE  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

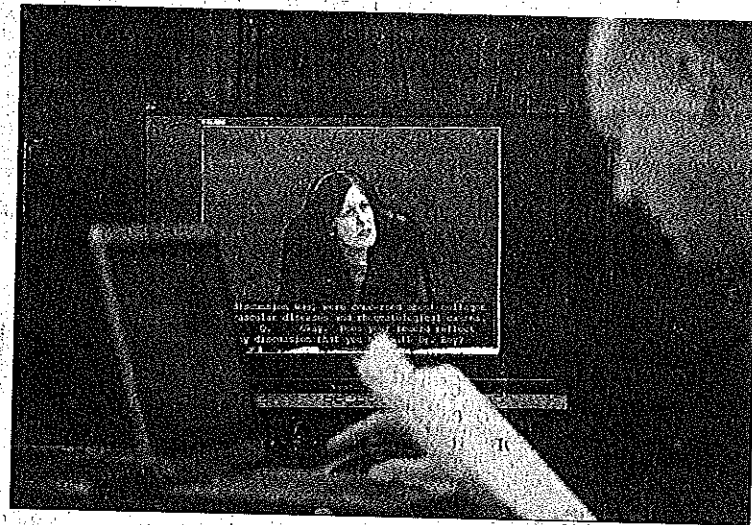
Lawyers squared off in opening statements yesterday in the medical malpractice suit against a Bayonne doctor whose patient died five days after a lymph node and lung biopsy procedure in 2006, officials said.

"Sometimes bad things happen to good people, but sometimes bad things happen that shouldn't happen," said Christian LoPiano, who is representing the widower of Cecille Vida, 46, of Bayonne, in the suit against Dr. Margaret Engel.

The trial is being heard in Hudson County Superior Court in Jersey City.

Vida went to Bayonne Medical Center on Nov. 19, 2006 complaining of shortness of breath and tests revealed she suffered from severe pulmonary hypertension and had swollen lymph nodes in her lung.

The suit alleges the biopsy procedure represented a great risk due to the hypertension and should not have been done without first pursuing low-risk tests. During the procedure, Vida's oxygen level fell and she was on a ventilator until her death, court papers say.



Five other doctors originally named in the suit have settled, but LoPiano argued that Engel was negligent in her role as Vida's primary physician because she was to oversee the treatment.

Engel's lawyer, Neil Reisman, said yesterday the plaintiff has already settled with other doctors and was now seeking to switch the blame onto Engel, who had relied on the decisions of specialists she consulted on how to best treat Vida.

The defense attorney said doctor's could have begun treating Vida for hypertension but it

was their consensus that a biopsy was more pressing even if it presented risk because it was important to learn if the lymph nodes were cancerous and if so, what type of cancer it represented.

Reisman said testimony will show Engel acted in Vida's best interest and was in no way negligent.

He said even the correct practice of medicine can sometimes yield poor outcomes.

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