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TEXAS NEWS



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Sunday, April 9, 2000

Dismissed pathologist gets \$250,000 whistleblower judgment

HOUSTON (AP) - A federal jury has awarded \$250,000 to a former Harris County pathologist who claims she was fired in 1998 for exposing alleged illegal activity in the medical examiner's office.

Key Info

It is the second time a jury has sided with a fired worker from the medical examiner's office who crossed Dr. Joye Carter to report problems in that county office.

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The pathologist, Marilyn Murr Doyle, said she was grateful for the award.

"I did what was right, and I feel like they backed me up," Doyle told the Houston Chronicle. "I feel like justice has been done."

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Key Info

Doyle testified that she went to Carter on Jan. 5, 1998, with concerns that Dr. Delbert Van Dusen was performing autopsies without a Texas medical license.

Although Carter said Van Dusen's activities were within legal boundaries, Doyle took the matter to Harris County District Attorney John B. Holmes Jr. four days later.

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www.tsc.state.tx.us/OPINIONS/1000/PDF/023/pave.pdf

Her report spurred an investigation, which she discussed anonymously with a Houston Chronicle reporter in a Jan. 16, 1998, article.

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Key Info

Though not named publicly by Holmes or the newspaper, Carter knew Doyle gave the interview and sparked the investigation, Doyle claimed. Carter fired Doyle two months later.

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F. Clinton Gambill II, the county's attorney, said he will ask U.S. District Judge Melinda Harmon to throw out the jury verdict because of contradictory evidence presented at trial.

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Jurors deliberated about six hours before reaching a decision.

Key Info

In November 1998, the county agreed to paid Dr. Elizabeth "Libby" Johnson a \$375,000 settlement.

Key Info

Johnson sued the county in March 1997, contending that Carter fired her for reporting potentially illegal cover-ups and sabotage at the office.

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