



Widow of longtime radio legend Steven Collins sues hospital for wrongful death

by DANA DiFILIPPO

Daily News Staff Writer

The family of the late radio legend and civic leader E. Steven Collins has filed a wrongful-death lawsuit against Chestnut Hill Hospital, saying staff there failed to immediately diagnose and treat the heart attack that killed him last fall.

Collins, 58, arrived at the hospital at 9 p.m. Sept. 8 with the classic symptoms of a heart attack - pressure and pain in his chest, high blood pressure, labored breathing, clammy skin and related complaints, said attorneys Tom Kline and Dean Weitzman, who filed the complaint in Philadelphia Common Pleas Court this morning.

He promptly and properly received an electrocardiogram, Kline added. But instead of treating Collins immediately with the standard blood-thinning and artery-opening drugs like aspirin, nitroglycerin and heparin, an emergency-room doctor ordered a drug that lowered his blood pressure so much that his heart couldn't recover, Kline said.

The doctor also failed to immediately consult a cardiologist, diagnose an acute arterial blood clot or order a follow-up electrocardiogram and drugs that could have saved Collins, Kline added.

Although staff prepared to transfer him to Penn Presbyterian Medical Center, Collins' condition worsened, and doctors declared him dead that morning at 12:09 a.m.

A Chestnut Hill Hospital spokeswoman didn't immediately return a call for comment.

The suit was filed by Collins' widow, Lisa Duhart-Collins, of Laverock, Montgomery County. It names as defendants the hospital, emergency room Dr. James Miranda and associated entities including Tennessee-based Community Health Systems, Inc., which owns Chestnut Hill Hospital.

"They had an urgent medical situation on their hands, which should have been handled immediately and should have been handled differently," Kline said. "We believe that the care was substandard and his death should have been avoided. Had they stabilized him and acted differently and promptly, he would still be on the radio today and still be doing the good things he has been doing for the community all his life."

Collins, known as "the unofficial mayor of Philadelphia," was a longtime radio and TV public-affairs commentator locally and nationally.

At the time of his death, the father of two worked for Radio One as director of urban marketing and external relations and host of a weekly show, Philly Speaks on Old School 100.3.

In the community, he headed or participated in groups from Mayor Nutter's Commission on Literacy and Big Brothers Big Sisters to the Urban League of Philadelphia and Philadelphia Martin Luther King Jr. Association.

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