

Medical Malpractice - A cardiologist's performance of a catheter ablation (without sufficient anti-coagulation) was linked to a devastating stroke

LaFarge v. Kyker, 1:08-185

Plaintiff: Philip W. Thomas, Jackson and Marc D. Amos, *Nichols Crowell Gillis Cooper & Amos*, Columbus

Defense: Robert K. Upchurch and David W. Upchurch, *Holland Ray Upchurch & Hillen*, Tupelo

Verdict: Defense verdict on liability

Federal: **Aberdeen**

Judge: Sharion Aycock

Date: 5-23-11

Joseph LaFarge, then age 72, treated at Cardiology Associates of North Mississippi in May of 2006 for shortness of breath and chest pain. He was diagnosed with an atrial fibrillation. A course of conservative care started with Dr. Francisco Sierra. Sierra a general cardiologist put LaFarge on anti-coagulants in an effort to prevent the risk of stroke as his heart was restored to a regular rhythm.

On 5-30-06, a second doctor (Barry Bertolet - interventional cardiology) attempted a heart catheterization. During that procedure, LaFarge's atrial flutter became at extreme, his heart racing at 180 beats a minute.

Dr. Keith Kyker, an electrophysiologist with the group was consulted. Concerned about the atrial flutter and the risks associated with it (he also consulted with Bertolet), Kyker performed a radio-frequency catheter ablation. [As it was conducted while LaFarge was already under anesthesia for the catheterization, Kyker called his daughter to discuss the risks of the procedure.]

Following the ablation, LaFarge's condition did not improve. A decision was made to do it on 6-5-06. [That was a Monday.] LaFarge suffered a massive stroke the night before the procedure was to be repeated. It was devastating and left him paralyzed on his left side. LaFarge remained in a skilled nursing home until his death in 2010.

The full report has the experts and verdict details.

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