

Patient got wrong type of blood, suit says

BY TIM BRYANT
Of the Post-Dispatch

A retired Salvation Army minister had successful heart surgery at Barnes-Jewish Hospital but died as a result of two transfusions of a mismatched blood type, a wrongful death suit claims.

Barnes-Jewish and Washington University are defendants in the suit filed Tuesday in St. Louis Circuit Court. The plaintiff is Georgia Wood, whose husband, Richard Wood, died Aug. 6 last year.

Her lawyer, Jim Shoemake, said Wood entered the hospital Feb. 4 last year for coronary bypass surgery. The surgery was successful but later he got transfusions of A positive type blood when he should have received O positive blood, the suit contends.

As a result, Wood, 67, allegedly suffered renal failure, severe internal bleeding, liver failure, multiple infections and septic shock.

"He never left the hospital," Shoemake said.

In a statement, the hospital said: "We express our sympathies to the family of Richard Wood. Further details of the care this patient received cannot be discussed due to the pending litigation."

After the two transfusions of A positive blood, Wood got a transfusion of the proper blood type but by then he was beyond recovery, Shoemake said.

The suit seeks unspecified actual and punitive damages.

Georgia Wood, of south St. Louis County, said hospital officials had acknowledged the problem and had told her she would not be billed for her husband's surgery.

The couple, who married in 1958, were Salvation Army ministers. Richard Wood had retired as a minister and was working as a men's clothing salesman at the time of his surgery.

Georgia Wood said she took early retirement last year as director of a Salvation Army shelter in Belleville.

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