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Jury says hospital didn't discriminate

By MARK BOCHIETTI
Staff Writer

NEWPORT NEWS — A U.S. District Court jury deliberated for 40 minutes Tuesday before finding that Hampton General Hospital had not practiced age discrimination in firing a 36-year-old supervisor.

Sylvia S. Toney, who had led the hospital's collection department since 1976, showed little emotion when the jury returned at 12:30 p.m. with its verdict that age was not a determining factor in her discharge in February 1985.

Mrs. Toney, of Hampton, was seeking \$250,000 in back pay and damages, a daily stipend until the time she would have retired and restoration of her pension rights.

Testimony during the five-day trial revealed that Mrs. Toney would have been coded in the pension system in a year when she declined a demotion to a lower-paying job and was hired by Director of Finance Jennifer Greenwell.

Mrs. Greenwell, a defendant in the suit, testified Friday that Mrs. Toney was disciplined for resisting improvements in collection procedures, for doing personal tasks at work and for patient complaints about contacts with her department.

Bank and file workers from the department had testified for both the hospital and Mrs. Toney. Some attacked her "unkept" appearance and criticism of hospital administrators, others defended her as a professional who trained them well in collection procedures.

But attorneys for Mrs. Toney argued before the jury Tuesday morning that she was simply one more victim of a conspiracy to rid the finance department of older supervisors.

Joseph T. Dixon, one of Mrs. Toney's attorneys, had consistently tried to prevent evidence to show that other supervisors were either demoted or forced out after Mrs. Greenwell took over as finance director in 1980.

Several former Hampton General supervisors — all 40 or older — testified with the jury out of the courtroom that they believed they had been forced to resign or were demoted for reasons other than performance.

But Judge Richard B. Kellam ruled that the witnesses did not constitute a sufficient pool to statistically show a pattern of discrimination and refused to admit their testimony.

Mrs. Toney's claim also suffered under evidence that showed three of four supervisors now in the department at Mrs. Toney's level are 40 or older. Defense attorneys also presented documents showing that nearly half of department workers are 40 or older.

Attorneys for Mrs. Toney had presented witnesses and documents contending that she ran a happy and productive department. Her performance was consistently considered good until July 1984, according to testimony, when she allegedly was warned by Mrs. Greenwell. "If you don't resign in six months, then I'll force you to resign and I will be pretty good."

Mrs. Greenwell denied making that statement, although at her own trial from a deposition in which she admitted telling Mrs. Toney in July that a consultant's study would bring many changes and "based on my observation that for her, it would be very difficult for her to carry out."

MO.S.O.S Victim's brother pleads for information

By RAY BETZNER
Staff Writer

WILLIAMSBURG — The brother of a slain College of William and Mary student joined college and FBI officials Tuesday in a plea for information that could explain two mysterious deaths on the Colonial Parkway.

Robert Dowksi said his sister, 21-year-old Rebecca Dowksi, was expected to go home to Poughkeepsie, N.Y., during the fall break which began after classes Friday. Instead, family members were contacted Sunday after police identified her as one of two women found in a car over an embankment along the Colonial Parkway.

Ms. Dowksi and Catherine Martin Thomas, 27, of Virginia Beach, were found by a jogger Sunday. Both women had their throats cut in what an FBI agent has called a "violent crime."

The two women were last seen leaving the dormitory area on campus.

"Where they were going, I don't know," Dowksi said.

Dowksi asked on behalf of family members that anyone with information to cooperate with investigators, as far as he



Robert Dowksi

... no clear motive knows, no details on the movements of the two women have been uncovered, Dowksi said.

Anyone who may have seen them or have information on where the two women went Thursday night is asked to call the FBI at 823-3111.

College Police Chief Richard Cumber said knowing where the two women were over the week- end is "vital information that

we desperately need." The college police are assisting the FBI in the investigation.

"There is no clear motive in the case. The wallets were found on the victims. They had money. Beyond that, not a lot is known," Dowksi said Tuesday.

Family members did not report Ms. Dowksi missing because her schedule was loose and they thought she might have stopped to see friends in Washington or at her former school, Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pa. She told a sister she intended to arrive in Poughkeepsie at some point during the break.

After her body was discovered, investigators found Ms. Dowksi's car on campus, packed and ready for the trip she never started.

Dowksi, an Atlanta resident, said he did not know Ms. Thomas nor do family members know how the two women met. Ms. Dowksi transferred to W&M in January and was in her second semester there.

Ms. Dowksi was a Mid-Atlantic Conference All-Star in softball at Dickinson. She lived in Paris for two years, spoke fluent French and had a strong interest

in young people.

While in Williamsburg, she worked briefly for the Garden of Children child care center as a teacher's aide for 2-3 months. Center Director Amy Dox said she was "a very dependable, very reliable person. She was a real sweet girl. Everybody here liked her."

Dowksi said his sister was interested in business management and came to W&M for its business administration program. She had extensive computer experience and hoped for a job in the international business community.

The two were found in a car belonging to Ms. Thomas about 5:30 p.m. Sunday after the car was spotted by a jogger. The car had either been driven or pushed over an embankment.

Ms. Thomas, a saleswoman with Broker Securities Inc. of Virginia Beach, left the Navy as a lieutenant in May. She had been stationed in Norfolk where she worked for the last two years as an assistant protocol officer. She remained in the Norfolk area, taking business classes at Old Dominion University. For the last four months, she worked as a booker.

Work underway to straighten Sinclair Circle

By ROBERT GRAVES
Staff Writer

HANFORD — Work has begun on a nine-month, \$1.1 million project to transform Sinclair Circle at Mercury Boulevard and Armistead Avenue into straight-through lanes.

The work, started Oct. 1, probably will be finished by July 4 and increase the intersection's capacity 65 percent.

City Traffic Engineer Larry Rizzo said the traffic bottleneck at the circle, which has been gen-

erated from four to six lanes on Mercury, Armistead will remain four lanes, says Ralph Caldwell, senior civil engineer of the city public works department.

The biggest disruptions for motorists during construction will be the shifting of Mercury's eastbound and westbound lanes.

The traffic signals will be relocated during the final phase. In peak hours, Mercury has a lot of green time, and cars are backed up on Armistead for a couple of blocks," Caldwell says.

There are also backups on Mercury westbound in the evenings and eastbound in the mornings.

The work will include dual left-turn lanes on Armistead and Mercury to double the traffic flow during green time, he said.

The trouble has been that the circle can no longer handle the heavy volume of traffic carried by Mercury and Armistead. Rizzo's. The intersection circles became popular as a way to smooth the flow of traffic when volumes were small, he says.

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