

BREAKING Helena mayor, Montana US Senate candidate charged in reported hit-and-run

https://helenair.com/news/local/jury-awards-k-to-estate-of-helena-man-resuscitated-against/article_2b84aca4-0e54-5a5f-ab42-8b51f5236fcc.html

BREAKING TOP STORY

Jury awards \$400K to estate of Helena man resuscitated against his will

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99¢ FOR THE FIRST MONTH



The fountain outside St. Peter's Hospital is shown.

Independent Record

A Helena jury has awarded more than \$400,000 in damages to the estate of a man who was resuscitated against his will at St. Peter's Hospital.

St. Peter's and Dr. Lee Harrison were found negligent for violating a "do not resuscitate or intubate" order for Rodney Knoepfle of Helena, who was resuscitated after coding two separate times. On Thursday, the jury awarded \$209,100.29 in damages for medical care and another \$200,000 for mental and physical pain and suffering.

Officials with the hospital, which has since been rebranded as St. Peter's Health, declined to comment on the case.

"It is not our practice to provide comment on litigation or legal matters," Andrea Groom, vice president of communications for St. Peter's, said in a statement to the Independent Record.

In 2016, Knoepfle went to St. Peter's Hospital for medical treatment and told medical professionals that he did not want to be resuscitated. A band indicating that he did not want to be resuscitated or intubated was placed on his wrist.

Knoepfle was found unresponsive in his room at St. Peter's on March 21, 2016. Instead of leaving him, staff performed CPR and resuscitated him against his wishes.

Cheryl O'Donnell, Knoepfle's wife, was called to the hospital, believing he had died. Eight minutes after she received a call to confirm that her husband did not want to be resuscitated, St. Peter's called again and told her that medical providers had forgotten about his wishes and resuscitated him.

A week later, Knoepfle was found unresponsive again and was resuscitated a second time with ventilation and other chemicals.

Knoepfle sued St. Peter's for violating his desire to not be resuscitated or intubated. Knoepfle died in 2018, but his estate and his wife carried on the case with lawyers Michael McKeon and Mark Kovacich.

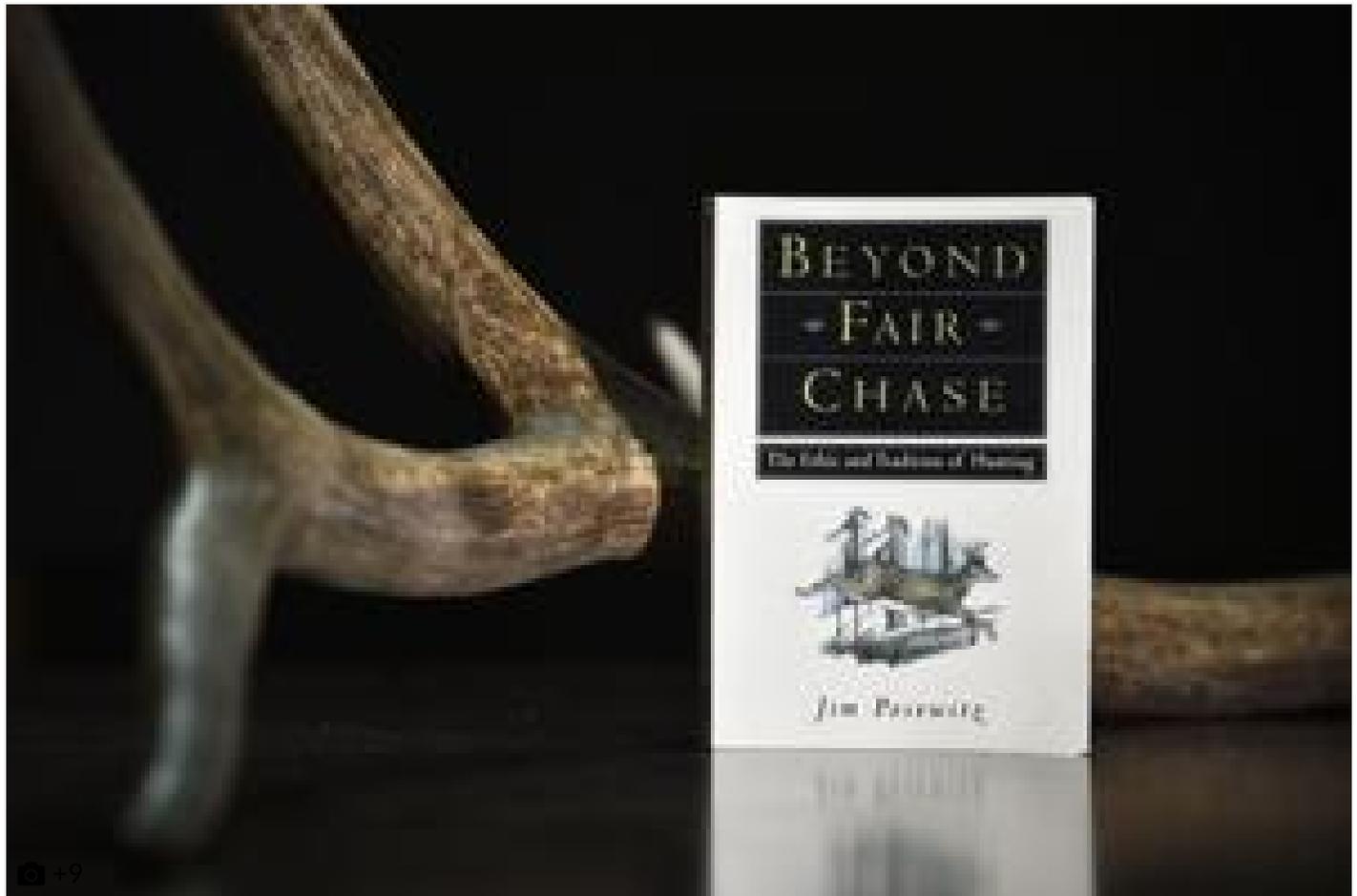
McKeon said that while "do not resuscitate" laws vary throughout the United States, Montana has a "liberal" view of the rights of patients.

"The jury certainly showed that the systemic failure of St. Peter's was significant," McKeon said. "They violated Rodney's right to dignity and the right to medical care, what treatment he wanted or didn't want."

Neither McKeon or Kovacich knew whether the case would be appealed.

"At this point, we don't know their intentions," Kovacich said.

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