

Fatality claimed in flood-damages trial

by Kevin Davy
 Denver Capital Bureau

and not the New Year's Eve flood.

The 1987 New Year's Eve flood that damaged hundreds of homes in the city of Denver was the cause of death for the wife of one Katrina when she was making him so ill that he died about 10 months later, according to an attorney who is suing the city on behalf of flood victims.

Michael Stern, a lawyer with Schuttler & Glickstein, told a District Court jury yesterday that 65-year-old William Kollock died because his throat muscles were strained during the stress of the flood.

The plaintiff later developed into pneumonia, eventually killing him, eventually making his spirit wander away into nothing, Stern said. But city attorneys will argue Kollock's pre-existing illnesses were to blame for his death.

But their claims out of court. But about 135 families represented by Schuttler & Glickstein have been unable to reach an agreement with the city.

A previous District Court ruling established the city is liable for the flooding, the trial is now being planned to set the amount of damages, that should be awarded to each family.

Yesterday, Stern outlined for the jury at least \$82,000 in damages he contends is owed the Beghtles for their medical care, damage to their home and possessions, and for the money lost because their home did not fit up in value as quickly as it should have.

At the Beghtles' home, the family and neighbors thought they would die when the water topped the home's electrical outlets, and Wilmer Beghtles collapsed during the commission.

Tanaka said the city will produce experts to try to determine that the claims by the two families are inflated, and will ask the jury to set more "reasonable" damages.

Kollock and his wife were evacuated from their home, but Kollock ended up walking through flood waters to fetch the family dog, Stern said.

His health deteriorated after the flood, Stern said. He said the flood cut Kollock's life short by five to 10 years.

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