

## **THE HERALD, May 11, 1994**

### **“Jury awards \$2.2 million to family of dead hero” Blames Broward General, three doctors for teenager’s fate By Stephen Smith**

A teenager – with a streak of kindness as long as his lanky frame – died a hero six autumns ago.

He didn’t need to die at all, a Broward jury decided Tuesday. Bad medical practices killed Allan R. Owens II as much as the butcher knife that was thrust into his back. The price placed on the loss of a son: \$2.2 million, the burden of blame borne by the county’s biggest hospital and a triad of doctors.

“I wanted justice for my son,” Sue Owens said, after almost six years of pain, six weeks of testimony, five hours of jury deliberation. “There’s no amount of money that’s going to bring Allan back – I’d give them all the money back and more if I could get my son back.”

He was stabbed defending his girlfriend’s mother, a woman tormented by the man she loved. As dusk dawned one September evening in 1988, Edward Savory, clutching an eight-inch knife, came for his wife, Constance.

The only thing standing between husband and wife: Owens, 17. Three times, Edward Savory buried the knife in Owens’ back. He crumpled in the driveway, Constance Savory cradling his head.

He implored her to run. She did. Paramedics took Owens to Broward General Medical Center, a state-of-the art hospital. An emergency room doctor named Evan Tow examined him. You’re stabbed, all right, Tow told the teen. Nothing serious.

So he waited. Five hours he waited: “They didn’t think there was a lot of bleeding going on, but there was,” said Scott Schlesinger, attorney for Owens’ parents. Another doctor, Imad Tabry, gave Owens a cursory exam and dressed the wounds.

Five hours after Owens got to the hospital, Dr. Victor Shabanah started suturing wounds.

“He was gushing blood,” Schlesinger said. “He kissed his mom goodbye, he kissed his dad goodbye. All that time he was bleeding to death.”

The jury found Broward General 15 percent at fault, but because Shabanah was working as an agent of the hospital. Because Shabanah is bankrupt, the hospital is also responsible for his 33 percent of the blame. Tow, the jury ruled, was 44 percent at fault, and Tabry 8 percent.

The parents aren't likely to see much of the money owed by Broward General – it's a public hospital and, thus, if the family wants to collect more than \$100,000, the Florida Legislature must take special action.

Edward Savory is serving 25 years in prison for murder. Tow has moved to Houston. None of the doctors could be reached for comment.

“Certainly,” hospital spokesman Nat Goren said, “we sympathize with the family.”