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MAN DIES IN FAST ALLOWED BY COURT

Published: February 5, 1984

An 85- year-old retired college president who a state court said had the right to starve himself to death has died, the family's attorney said today.

The daughter of the man - whose identity has remained secret - spent an hour with him before he died late Friday night, the attorney, Frank Clark, said in a statement.

The man, who was said to have been depressed over a series of illnesses, had been fasting at a nursing home here for 47 days, since last Dec. 21.

In a ruling Thursday, Justice Donald H. Miller of State Supreme Court in Syracuse ruled that nothing should be done to prevent the patient's death unless the man changed his mind. He also ruled that the nursing home, the Plaza Health and Rehabilitation Center, had neither the obligation nor the right to force-feed the patient. Confined to Wheelchair

The ruling came in an action brought by the nursing home, where the man had been a patient since earlier in the year. He has been confined to a wheelchair in recent months and suffers from a variety of ailments, including heart disease, arthritis and hardening od the arteries. His wife died in 1980.

Justice Miller said he had based his ruling on First Amendment rights of privacy and on a state public health law that allows patients knowingly to refuse medically necessary treatment.

The judge had ordered that the man's name be kept secret to protect his privacy. Tonight, Mr. Clark, the attorney, said the family would have no further comment.

The case had stirred wide interest, and on Friday, Governor Cuomo asked that a special advisory group review the ruling.

The patient's daughter said her father had been a prominent electrical engineer and college president who had served as a United States trade representative on technological matters to India and France. Mr. Clark said no funeral arrangements had been made.

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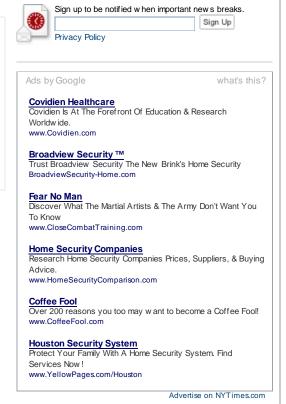
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