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**WIFE OF FORMER DALLAS COWBOYS PLAYER RON SPRINGS FILES SUIT  
AFTER MINOR SURGERY LEAVES HIM IN A COMA--  
PERMANENTLY INCAPACITATED MENTALLY, PHYSICALLY**

**Rookie Physician Chosen for High-Risk Patient with  
Previous Anesthesia Problems**

**Shawn Springs of Washington Redskins and Everson Walls, Former Dallas  
Cowboys Teammate, Offer Statements**

**Case Filed in State Court; 2<sup>nd</sup> Lawsuit in Federal Court  
to Mount Constitutional Challenge to Texas Award Cap**

**DALLAS, TX (January 22, 2008)** – After the triumph of a successful kidney transplant from his Dallas Cowboys teammate Everson Walls early last year that was cheered by millions of fans around the country, former NFL star Ron Springs was celebrating life. This celebration turned into the tragedy of a grossly botched minor surgery in October 2007 and the wife of the former Cowboys running back today sued two area doctors, claiming their actions left her husband in a coma for the remainder of his life.

On behalf of Plano resident Adriane (Mrs. Ron) Springs, Les Weisbrod of Miller, Curtis & Weisbrod, LLP, a Texas law firm that specializes in medical malpractice and catastrophic injury litigation, filed a civil action today in state District Court of Dallas County. The lawsuit alleges that anesthesiologist Joyce Abraham, M.D.; Texas Anesthesia Group, P.A.; and plastic surgeon David Godat, M.D. were grossly negligent in administering anesthesia to Ron Springs during minor surgery at Medical City Hospital in Dallas last fall to remove a small cyst on his left forearm.

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## WIFE OF FORMER DALLAS COWBOYS PLAYER RON SPRINGS FILES SUIT...

### Page Two

Within weeks of this state action, Mr. Springs will join and become a lead plaintiff in a federal constitutional challenge to the Texas cap on non-economic damages in healthcare liability actions. The plaintiffs who are in the constitutional challenge will allege that the Texas law violates the U.S. Constitution.

“Ron was doing so well after his kidney transplant,” Mrs. Springs said. “Now he can move very little and cannot respond to our words. We never imagined that such a minor operation would have such a tragic outcome. We are devastated.”

She was joined at the news conference by Ron’s son, Shawn Springs, a star cornerback with the Washington Redskins, and Everson Walls, a close friend and former Dallas Cowboys teammate of Ron Springs who donated a kidney to Mr. Springs in early 2007.

“This is a tragic situation for me and my entire family,” said Shawn Springs, who, like his father, has excelled in football with the Washington Redskins. “My father and I talked each and every week before my games. The Thursday night before this devastating procedure we visited for over two hours on the phone. He shared with me his excitement about what he had planned for the future and his commitment to The Ron Springs and Everson Walls Gift for Life Foundation, its messages and supporters. All this and more has been taken away from my family.”

The 51-year-old Mr. Springs, a Type 2 diabetic for sixteen years, received a kidney transplant in February 2007 from his close friend and former Dallas Cowboys teammate Everson Walls. Mr. Springs had gone home and come off dialysis before the bungled and unnecessary general anesthesia left him, according to the lawsuit, in a persistent vegetative state, totally mentally and physically handicapped.

“I’m extremely angry,” Mr. Walls said. “I gave a kidney so my dear friend could live a more normal life. Ron and I established the Foundation ([www.giftforlifefoundation.org](http://www.giftforlifefoundation.org)) to show people the importance of organ donations and the successes of transplants. Too many people have misconceptions about what happened to Ron. The transplant and recovery were a success. Now his life is in ruins due to a simple cyst removal.”

## WIFE OF FORMER DALLAS COWBOYS PLAYER RON SPRINGS FILES SUIT...

### Page Three

The lawsuit charges that on October 12, 2007, Mr. Springs entered the hospital for the cyst procedure. No appropriate pre-operative laboratory studies were ordered for the patient, a high-risk candidate for any operation due to his kidney transplant and related diabetes.

Dr. Abraham, only three months out of her anesthesiology residency, also did not review the medical records from Mr. Springs' transplant surgery that noted his difficulties with the breathing tube used for general anesthesia. She never successfully placed a tube down his throat.

Mr. Springs immediately started having problems breathing. Still unable to insert the breathing tube, Dr. Abraham induced a paralyzed state to try intubation again, and was still not successful. During this time, Mr. Springs suffered a heart attack and stopped breathing; he was revived and another physician managed to insert a breathing tube through his nose, but by this time Mr. Springs had been deprived of oxygen long enough to sustain extensive brain damage. To this day he remains unresponsive to verbal commands.

"Given Mr. Springs' medical history, he never should have been scheduled for general anesthesia for such a minor procedure," said Les Weisbrod, partner, Miller, Curtis & Weisbrod and president-elect of the America Association for Justice (AAJ) which was formerly known as the Association of Trial Lawyers of America (ATLA). "In all likelihood, Mr. Springs would be doing fine today had the anesthesiologist not been a rookie and if the doctors had done their homework. The doctors' gross negligence has taken away from the Springs family a loving father and devoted husband and cost the people of Texas and our country the loss of a true hero and role model."

"This case underscores the injustice of a \$250,000 cap in Texas on non-economic damages for the most severely injured victims of medical malpractice. The laws need to be changed so that other catastrophic victims like Ron Springs can be fairly compensated," Weisbrod said.

In her lawsuit, Mrs. Springs charges Dr. Abraham with gross negligence for failing:

- To perform a proper pre-operative evaluation;
- To perform pre-operative laboratory studies;

## WIFE OF FORMER DALLAS COWBOYS PLAYER RON SPRINGS FILES SUIT...

### Page Four

- To discuss different anesthesia options and the associated risks with Ron Springs and his family;
- To select the appropriate method of anesthesia;
- To respond properly once she recognized Springs' difficulty breathing and;
- To intervene appropriately in Ron Springs' care and treatment.

The lawsuit presents similar charges against Dr. Godat and also cites him for not choosing an experienced anesthesiologist more suited for a high-risk patient.

The lawsuit asks for an unspecified amount of actual, exemplary, and punitive damages from Dr. Abraham, Dr. Godat and their practices for Mr. Springs' past, present and future loss of earnings, medical expenses, pain and suffering and loss of enjoyment of life.

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#### *Available to the media:*

- *A copy of the file-stamped Springs petition*
- *Two expert reports*
- *Photo of Ron Springs and Everson Walls*
- *B-roll/DVD of Ron Springs, Shawn Springs and Everson Walls from CBS Sports, The NFL Today, November 2007 (Beta version available on request)*
- *Available spokespersons:*
  - ***Les Weisbrod**, partner, Miller Curtis & Weisbrod and president-elect of the American Association for Justice (AAJ) formerly known as the Association of Trial Lawyers of America (ATLA)*
  - ***Shawn Springs**, son of Ron Springs, cornerback on the Washington Redskins*
  - ***Everson Walls**, former Dallas Cowboys teammate of Ron Springs who donated his kidney during a transplant procedure in February 2007*