

### **\$1.05M in Medical Malpractice Suit**

**Hargadon v. Deane:** A Dover doctor will pay \$1.05 million to resolve claims that he caused the death of a patient by prescribing painkillers despite knowing she was abusing them.

Patti Hargadon of Hackettstown died on Sept. 20, 2006, at the age of 40, from what an autopsy found was a methadone overdose, says **Barry Packin**, of **Nagel Rice** in Roseland, who represents the family.

Francis Deane, an ear, nose and throat doctor in Dover who was treating Hargadon for chronic sinusitis, for years prescribed her pain killers such as Oxycontin, Percocet and methadone for symptoms such as headaches and facial pain, Packin says.

Deane admitted at deposition that he continued to do so even after Hargadon's health insurer sent him a letter in November 2005, saying she was obtaining narcotic pain medications from multiple providers.

A Dec. 6 settlement conference with Morris County Superior Court Judge **Stephan Hansbury** culminated in the Dec. 14 settlement.

Judge **Jared Honigfeld** will hold a

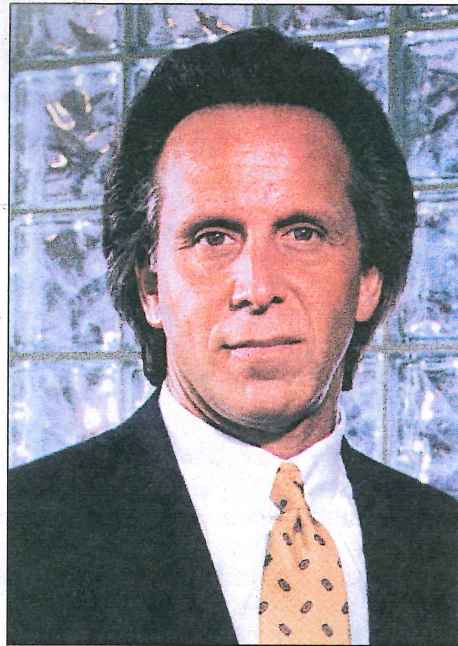


PHOTO BY CARMEN NATALE

**DOCTOR BLAMED FOR OVERDOSE:** Barry Packin claimed that an ear, nose and throat specialist prescribed painkillers even though he knew his patient was abusing them.

hearing next month on how to allocate the settlement money among Hargadon's husband Stephen and her five children.

Deane's lawyer, **Justin Johnson** of **Marshall Dennehey Warner Coleman & Goggin** in Roseland, did not return a call.

**Greg Kohn**, also of **Nagel Rice**, also worked on the case.

— *By Mary Pat Gallagher*