



Murder charged in fire deaths

Neighbor accused of setting fire that killed NE C.R. man and his daughter

By Christoph Trappe
The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — Prosecutors say Brian Zirtzman intentionally set fire to his neighbors' home so he could save the family of six.

But the fire on April 6 spread too quickly and killed Jay Grahlman, 38, and his daughter, Jaymie Grahlman, 6.

Zirtzman, 39, of 3748 H Ave. NE, was charged Friday with two counts of first-degree murder. He remained in the Linn County Jail in

lieu of \$500,000 cash bail last night.

If found guilty, he would be sentenced to life in prison.

Zirtzman, who has lived in Linn County most of his life, is unemployed. He was arrested Thursday night on suspicion of first-degree arson.

County Attorney Harold Denton opted to file first-degree murder charges, saying the charge applies because Zirtzman killed the Grahlmans while committing



Brian Zirtzman
Charged with first-degree murder

a forcible felony, in this case, first-degree arson.

Fire investigators recommended Zirtzman be charged with arson, but Denton opted to increase the charges to murder.

Court documents state that Zirtzman was at the home of Jay Grahlman and Vickie Reed-Grahlman, 3755 H Ave. NE, on April 5, playing cards and

The neighbor set the fire so he could save the family and gain recognition as a hero, prosecutors allege.

socializing.

Some members of the family went to bed just after 10 p.m. The fire was reported around 11:55 p.m.

Reed-Grahlman and three children — Kylie Reed, 9, Nicole Reed, 7, and Ida Mae

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SPECIAL REPORT

UI loses cancer scientist

Hendrix, 10 on team going to Northwestern; Iowa's stem cell stance cited as a reason

By Tom Walsh
The Gazette

IOWA CITY — Iowa's ban on the use of human embryos for stem cell research is costing the University of Iowa one of its world-class cancer research scientists.

Cell biologist Mary J.C. Hendrix recently announced she and at least 10 of her 16-member UI research team are relocating within a year to Northwestern University in Chicago. She will be taking with her three ongoing cancer research programs that to date have attracted \$5.4 million in federal funding.

"I was disappointed, to say the least, with the Legislature and their decision about stem cell research," Hendrix said



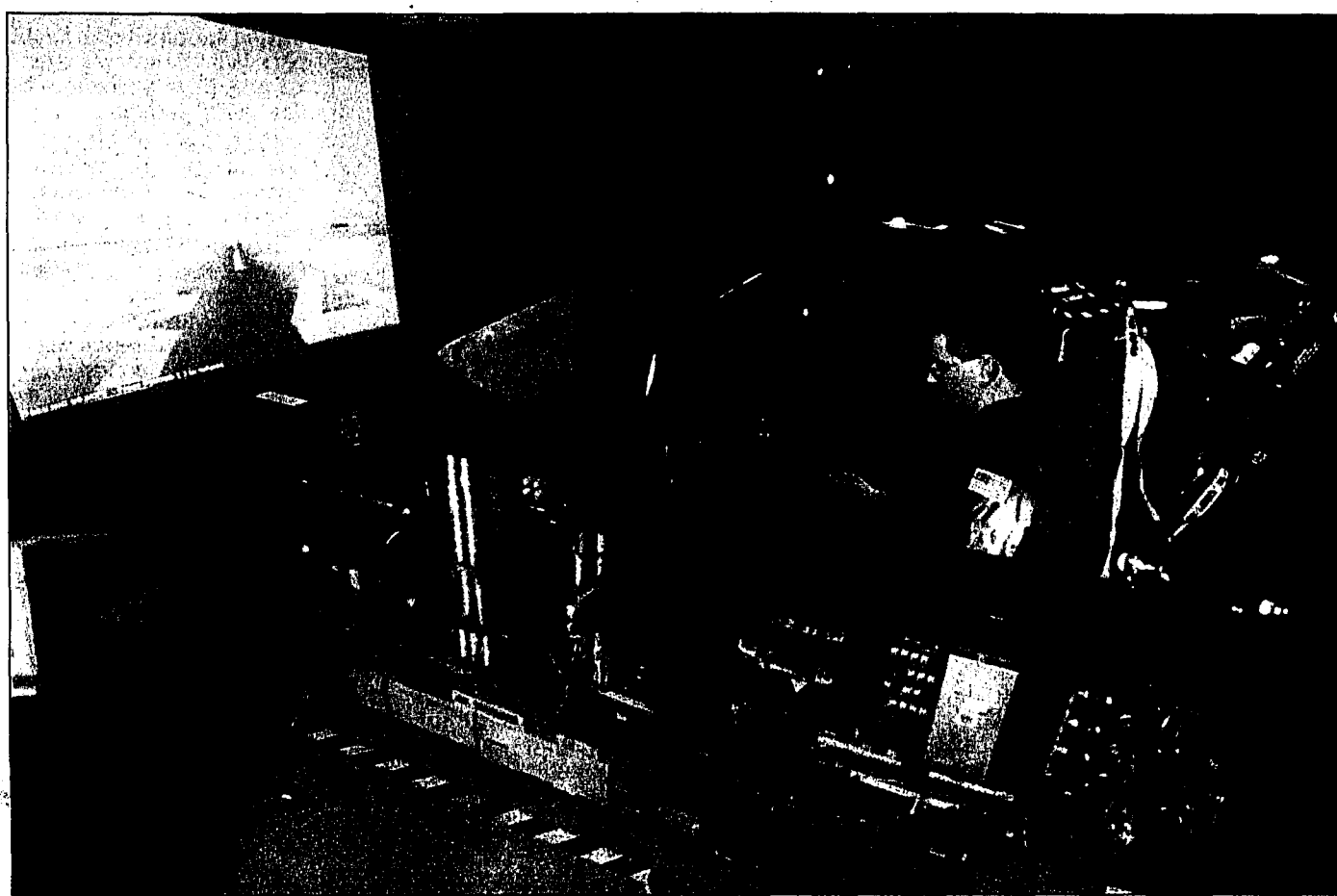
Mary J.C. Hendrix
Cell biologist

Friday. "Having said that, it's important to understand that was not the reason, but one of the reasons, why this job in Chicago was so attractive."

Although legislation adopted in 2001 stopped short of banning all stem cell research in Iowa, it's a felony under Iowa law for Hendrix and other scientists to generate stem cells through a process that involves replacing the genetic material of a human embryo

► STEM CELLS, PAGE 10A

HIGH-TECH LEISURE



Cliff Jette photos/The Gazette

Matt Wietlispach starts the enclosed flight simulator he has built in the basement of his Cedar Rapids home. Wietlispach, an avionics systems engineer who works on flight deck design and integration for Rockwell Collins, has spent five years building the simulator with avionics from military aircraft tracked down through the Internet.

On Cloud 9 in the cellar

Flight simulator in basement puts C.R. man in pilot's seat

By Steve Gravelle
The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — The novice pilot was in deep trouble, and he knew it.

Coming in high and hot, the jet fighter broke through thin clouds at about 9,000 feet over the De Kalb, Ill., airport. The pilot struggled with the control stick, trying to line up a runway.

"Landing is the hardest part," Matt Wietlispach had warned about 10 minutes earlier, before takeoff from Chicago's O'Hare Airport. "The problem with the fighter is, they do not fly slow well. They drop like a

rock unless they have a lot of speed behind them."

Sure enough, the cockpit shuddered as the plane yawed from side to side, engines howling. Warning lights flashed, buzzers sounded and a woman's voice woodenly chanted "altitude, altitude" as that precious commodity slipped away.

The fighter slammed into the ground, veered through a fence and plowed through a field. The careening plane never did stop.

Instead, Wietlispach reached into the cockpit and tapped a tiny computer mouse nearly hidden alongside the throttle. Instantly, the fighter, undamaged, was back on the runway at O'Hare on a clear summer day.

"This thing's great for



Matt Wietlispach struggles with a difficult maneuver in his home-built simulator in his basement. The simulator is set up to emulate the flight dynamics of an F-18 fighter.

parties," Wietlispach said.

Wietlispach's flight simulator is about the size of a large home freezer and takes up one end of the basement of his northwest Cedar Rapids home.

But visitors who strap

themselves into its ejection seat — like most cockpit components, scavenged from a scrapped Air Force jet — can virtually fly Wietlispach's front-line jet fighter virtually anywhere in the world.

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PUBLIC WORKS

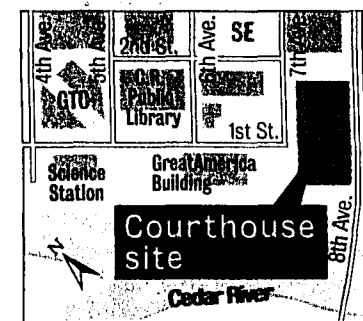
New courthouse in C.R. likely to cast big shadow

Building may be 50% taller than nearby GreatAmerica tower

By Rick Smith
The Gazette

CEDAR RAPIDS — The new federal courthouse will be bigger than previously thought, will cost more and may be as much as 50 percent taller than the GreatAmerica Building, the city's newest downtown building just upriver from the new courthouse site.

Project architects and the contractor met this week in Cedar Rapids with local officials and ones from the U.S. General Services Administra-



Gazette map

tion to discuss the courthouse design and construction.

Construction is still expected to begin in early 2005 on a site between the Cedar River and Second Street SE and

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HEALTH & EDUCATION

Chickenpox vaccination required before children enter school in fall

DES MOINES (AP) — Children will be required to receive the chickenpox vaccine before entering day care or kindergarten this fall, state health officials said Friday.

Children born after Sept. 15, 1997, will be required to receive the one-time vaccine to prevent what most parents consider "a childhood rite of passage," said Iowa Department of Public Health spokesman Kevin Teale.

Children born before that date, and adults, won't be required to receive the vaccination, Teale said.

Children born after Sept.

15, 1997, who have already had chickenpox won't be required to get the if they have medical documentation that they've had the disease.

Dr. Patricia Quinlisk, state epidemiologist, said the vaccine is needed to stave off an increase in the number of adults and older children who contract the disease.

At least two Iowa children in recent years have died after having chickenpox.

Chickenpox is an infectious disease that causes a blister-like rash, itching and fever. Most cases occur in children under the age of 15.

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Sunny and breezy

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Plans/ Building costs increase

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between Seventh and Eighth avenues SE.

It will be the largest public-works project in the city's history.

The GSA conducted a space-needs study earlier this year and concluded the courthouse will need 298,398 square feet of space, up 17 percent from an 8-year-old plan that called for a 254,323-square-foot building, according to John Topi, GSA project manager from Kansas City, Mo.

The total building cost, including design, site acquisition and preparation and construction management, is now estimated at \$99 million, up from an \$82 million being used as recently as last month.

To date, Congress has appropriated \$16 million for site development and design, and the design work is in full flower, Topi said.

William Rawn Architects, a Boston architectural firm that designed a summer concert hall for the Boston Symphony Orchestra, is the principal designer, working in conjunction OPN Architects of Cedar Rapids.

William Rawn attended this week's design meeting in Cedar Rapids and apparently tossed aside an idea that had been floated locally of how a new courthouse might sit. Initially, local officials had envisioned First Street SE curving toward Second Street SE in the 600 block, with the courthouse facing the curve.

GSA's Topi said Rawn believes strongly that First Street SE should end at Seventh Avenue SE at the front side of the courthouse and that the courthouse should face squarely back toward downtown.

The idea is for the courthouse to be "the cornerstone" of the expanded downtown, Topi said.

"William Rawn really wants this building to engage the city and be engaged by the city," Topi said. "... He doesn't want this to be something that's drawn back with grassy space and sort of remote."

By September, the architects will present six concepts for the building to a design committee made up of peers and GSA and court officials. The six ideas will be whittled to three in October before the final design is picked.

Topi said nothing has changed about plans for purchase of the site, currently owned and occupied by Mid-American Energy.

The development group, 2001 Development Corp. of Cedar Rapids, will buy the property, clear it and sell it to the city at cost. The city, in turn, will give the property to the project in exchange for the existing federal courthouse, at 101 First St. SE.

Topi said 2001 Development had wanted to close on the property purchase next month, but the sale is apt to be delayed. He said Mid-American is planning to move its operation to the old Highway Equipment facility at 616 D Ave. NW, but an environmental study of that site has not been completed.

Topi noted that some environmental contamination exists at the proposed courthouse site from a leaking underground storage tank. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources, though, has given the go-ahead for construction because the courthouse will not have a basement, he said.

Topi said the new courthouse will be built on three feet of fill so that it sits above the 500-year flood plain.

Ryan Cos. U.S. Inc. won a competition last month to build the courthouse. Actual construction will cost more than \$70 million, Topi said.

Construction may stretch over three years and at its peak could employ 200 workers.

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Stem cells/Law impedes research

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with the nucleus of another cell to grow a cluster of new cells in a culture dish.

"It's a very basic technological step, but there was the misperception — and even a genuine fear — that it would lead to the cloning of a human being," she said. "We are against that, and scientists in general are against cloning human beings. But once that fear permeates a community, it becomes very, very difficult to defend it."

Hendrix praised

Northwestern officials didn't disguise their delight at wooing a scientist of Hendrix's caliber.

In announcing her appointment as president and director of Children's Memorial Institute for Education and Research, Patrick Magoon, the CEO of Northwestern's Children's Memorial Medical Center, said he was "ecstatic."

He should be, according to U.S. Rep. Jim Leach. As Iowa's 2nd District representative, Leach often invited Hendrix to brief his Capitol Hill colleagues on the clinical, ethical and economic development implications of stem cell research.

"She's one of the most respected researchers in America, in one of the most promising fields of biology," Leach said.

"Dr. Hendrix is a gifted researcher whose laboratory has uncovered key findings that increase our understanding of how cancer metastasizes," said Dr. Lewis Landsberg, dean of Northwestern's Feinberg School of Medicine. "One of the things we've discovered," Hendrix said Friday, "is that many aggressive cancer cells look like human embryo stem cells. But, in order to test that hypothesis, we have to do some comparative science. This move represents an opportunity to do some of this work, work which cannot be done in Iowa. In Illinois, state law does not override federal law at this time."

"The procedure now prohibited in Iowa is critical to

Fire/Suspect led drive to aid family of victims

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Grahlman, 3 — escaped the fire. But Jay Grahlman and Jaymie suffered injuries resulting in their deaths — Jaymie on April 6 and Jay on April 9 at University Hospitals in Iowa City.

At the time, fire officials initially said the fire started in a wastebasket.

But on Friday, they said the fire started in a utility room and quickly spread to the kitchen and living room, trapping Jaymie, a kindergarten at Kenwood Elementary, in the bathroom.

Fire Department spokesman Dave Koch declined to elaborate on the discrepancy but said "sometimes there is more than one location where it's set."

Zirtzman, who coordinated a church drive to obtain clothing and household items for the Grahlman family after the fire, made an initial appearance Friday morning in Linn County District Court.

He wore an orange jail jumpsuit with a gray shirt underneath. The hearing was conducted via video, broadcasting from the jail.

Reed-Grahlman attended the hearing and left with teary eyes.

Jaymie's mother, Shannon Salmons of Logansport, Ind., learned of the charges on Friday.

"That's sick," she said in a telephone interview. "Why would anyone set a fire to get recognized when in all reality he killed two people. I want to see that justice is served."

Kirk Hankins, vice president of the St. Louis-based International Association of

Projects awarded to Mary Hendrix team

Dates	Total award	Granting agency/sponsor
6/93 to 4/07	\$3,001,812	U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, National Institutes of Health
9/96 to 4/98	\$196,000	U.S. Department of Defense, Department of the Navy
6/97 to 6/97	\$22,000	AT&T Bell Laboratories
7/97 to 6/04	\$1,106,591	U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, National Institutes of Health
1/98 to 9/03	\$1,340,740	U.S. Department of Defense, Department of the Navy
12/98 to 11/03	\$1,284,731	U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, National Institutes of Health
7/00 to 6/02	\$110,000	Wallace Research Foundation
9/00 to 7/03	\$84,000	Texas Tech University
9/00 to 6/04	\$1,343,936	U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, National Institutes of Health
Total	\$8,489,510	

Source: University of Iowa
*Virtual hospital **Cancer research
Gazette graphic

stem cell research," Leach said. "Iowa now has one of the toughest stem cell laws in the country. It's a law that essentially puts scientists in jail for researching ways of enriching and enabling life."

Hendrix has headed the UI's Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology since 1996. Since 1999, she has been the deputy director of the UI's Holden Comprehensive Cancer Center. She currently chairs the UI Carver College of Medicine's Research Advisory Committee.

UI fought ban

Fighting Iowa's ban on using human embryos in stem cell research was a top priority for UI officials in 2001, including David Skorton. At that time, he was UI's vice president for research and external affairs. He is now president.

Skorton and Dr. Robert Kelch, the UI vice president for medical affairs who is soon leaving for a job at the University of Michigan, were hopeful Gov. Tom Vilsack would veto the legislation. When Vilsack didn't, according to one source, UI officials were "furious."

Skorton refused comment on Hendrix's move to Northwestern and on the impact of the Iowa law on the UI's ability to recruit and retain research scientists.

Hendrix said she will continue her collaborations with her UI colleagues from Northwestern. Although her new job begins in January, her UI

lab will remain intact until July 2004. Some of her research, she said, will be subcontracted back to Iowa.

Hendrix notes many other UI scientists are involved in stem cell research involving animal cells, not human embryos.

"It's my hope that the community at large, and the Legislature in particular, will become more comfortable with this technology and that this legislation will be revisited," she said.

Legislators react

Sen. Bob Dvorsky, D-Coralville, feels the Legislature never took stem cell research seriously.

"There was no subjective look at the research," he said. "This whole thing was handled through the prism of

politics. What's unfortunate is that, within the current Legislature, no one seems to grasp that we have internationally renowned people working at University Hospitals."

Former Sen. John Redwine, a Republican from Sioux City and a physician, was the floor manager for the bill signed into law by Vilsack.

"I'm very surprised she's leaving, and there must be other reasons why," he said. "We discussed this at length and concluded there was no reason for that research to move out of the state of Iowa."

"There is a significant amount of data suggesting that stem cell research could be conducted on other types of stem cells and that there's no reason to destroy human life to facilitate research."

"The fact that people continue to ignore is that there are similar prohibitions in other states — like Michigan and Pennsylvania — that have very active research programs in this area and have attracted significant grant funding."

Rep. Dick Myers, D-Iowa City, said he's surprised to learn UI officials were upset with the legislation after he and Rep. Brad Hansen, R-Carter Lake, were successful in sponsoring an amendment that prevented all types of stem cell research from being banned.

"My understanding was the UI wasn't ready to do it, so the law was just delaying the

Stem cells

The human body contains more than 10 trillion cells of more than 250 types. Some tissues continually renew themselves from stem cells. Stem cells from embryos have an unlimited capacity for renewal and can become nearly every cell type in the body. Adult stem cells are limited in their renewal capacity and in their ability to develop into different cell types.

Source: UI Department of Anatomy and Cell Biology

possibility of doing something they were not ready to do anyway," Myers said. "Our amendment was proposed with the full support of the people at the university."

Hendrix said her new position will allow her to devote 40 percent of her time to basic research.

"The theme of my new lab is really very simple: discovery, development and delivery. I want to use innovative research as the foundation for the development of new ways of improving the lives of children and their parents. I want to know that my efforts are going to the greatest good. I want to continue to make a difference."

"I'm a researcher, and I find this opportunity (at Northwestern) to be challenging and extraordinary."

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