

For Immediate Release

**DEATH DUE TO "NATURAL CAUSES" AFFIRMS CORONER'S EXPERT IN
LEWIS INQUEST AFTER RE-EXAMINING ARTERIES**

TORONTO, May 7, 2002 – Lana Lewis died of natural causes due to an advanced disease process said Dr. Michael Pollanen, one of the original neuropathologists in the case, who testified today at the inquest into her death. Dr. Pollanen said he reached this conclusion after undertaking an exhaustive re-examination of more than 500 microscopic slides of Ms. Lewis's arteries in the fall of 2001. The re-examination included a detailed review of slides that were not considered when the original pathology report was written in 1997.

Dr. Pollanen testified that Ms. Lewis's stroke was caused by "end stage" atherosclerosis or "hardening of the arteries" noting that her left vertebral artery showed extensive plaque build-up inside the artery, particularly in the portion inside the skull. Dr. Pollanen explained that advanced atherosclerosis, such as was apparent in Ms. Lewis's vertebral arteries, leads to arterial damage and blood clotting which is highly associated with stroke.

He testified that a tear in the lining of the artery inside the skull was consistent with the advancement of the disease and indicated that a large clot had formed in the artery inside the skull. He dated the time of the tear as approximately three days prior to her death. Ms. Lewis visited her chiropractor 17 days prior to suffering a fatal stroke. An association between her neck adjustment and her stroke is one of the theories being investigated at the inquest.

Dr. Pollanen noted that Ms. Lewis's right vertebral artery also showed signs of the disease and was 70 per cent blocked by a blood clot caused by the hardening of the arteries. Crown counsel Tom Schneider asked Dr. Pollanen if the right artery would also likely have thrown a clot and caused a stroke as the disease continued to progress. Dr. Pollanen replied that it would.

Dr. Pollanen is an associate professor and consultant with the Forensic Pathology Unit of the Office of the Coroner, Ontario, and a visiting medical examiner for the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, Washington, D.C.

Dr. Pollanen is expected to continue his testimony for the balance of this week.

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