

Phoenix sued over woman's death

by UPI

PHOENIX -- The family of a New York woman who died while she was in custody at the Phoenix airport has sued city officials. The lawsuit was the latest chapter in an escalating battle between Phoenix officials and the politically connected family of Carol Gotbaum, a 45-year-old woman who strangled herself last year while in police custody, The Arizona Republic reported Friday. Gotbaum's death was ruled an accident. Earlier this year, the family filed an \$8 million claim against Phoenix, which the city rejected. The lawsuit alleges that city officials were negligent and violated Gotbaum's constitutional rights when she was arrested. Police used excessive force, failed to seek medical help and improperly shackled Gotbaum, the suit claims. "The police knew from their own statements that this wasn't a criminal situation, it was medical situation," Phoenix attorney Michael Manning said. "They knew she was sick, impaired, irrational." Phoenix officials have maintained that the police officers involved did nothing wrong. Gotbaum flew to Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport on Sept. 28 to catch a flight to a Tucson alcohol rehabilitation program but was arrested after a dramatic outburst, officials said.

Copyright © 2008, by United Press International. All Rights Reserved.

Phoenix sued over woman's death by UPI