

Successful law suit comforts woman caring for her dead sister's 15-year-old twins

By David L. Snelling
The Miami Laker staff

Miami Lakes resident Thelma Leon has taken over the role of caring for her sister's 15-year-old twin boys.

Like her sister, Clementina Brown, she makes sure the kids get the best education there is to offer and has become a devoted surrogate mother.

"She was constantly improving their lives and now it's my job," said Leon, who's employed at Headquarters Toyota in Miami Lakes. "She was a dedicated mother to her kids."

That's life after her sister's death, who died more than two years ago after she suffered from cardiac and respiratory arrest and went into a vegetative state until her death.

Last month, a Miami-Dade jury awarded the family of Brown \$8.5 million, finding a doctor 30 percent liable for her death after she complained about extreme pain in the abdominal area.

According to Leon's attorney, John M. Perez, the doctor was called upon as a specialist to see Brown, but failed to obtain any information from the nurses regarding her past history, including previous surgeries, making her a high risk for an internal hernia and deadly infection.

"I felt angry because I knew something was wrong," Leon said. "Things should have been going in the right direction and she would be here raising her kids



MIAMI LAKES lawyer John M. Perez and Thelma Leon won a \$8.5 million wrongful death judgement for Leon's sister, Clementina Brown.

instead of me."

Perez, a longtime Miami Lakes resident, said Brown's death could've been prevented had the doctor talked to the nurses and asked simple questions about her medical past.

"After a 45-minute operation, she would've been here today," he said.

Leon said her sister was a happy person who loved to socialize with a lot of people. "She had a lot friends and she was a very social and dedicated mother," she said.

Leon said they kept the boys' mother's medical condition a secret so they wouldn't be distracted until they finished elementary school.

Then, the family told them there's a chance she won't be coming back home. "But we have a lot of support from our family and friends," she said.