

Dr. Wayne Scott

Pathologist under state investigation

By JEANNINE GUTTMAN
Sun Staff Writer

SAN BERNARDINO — County pathologist Dr. Wayne Scott is being investigated for possible gross negligence and incompetence, an official for the state Board of Medical Quality Assurance said Friday.

Scott, whose contract to perform autopsies for the county coroner's office may be terminated Monday, has been under investigation since December 1979, said Frank Heckl, an investigator for the board's Southland division office in Santa Ana.

"Yes, he has been referred to us for disciplinary action," Heckl said. "We have an investigator in our San Bernardino office working on the case but we have not filed an action against him yet."

"And we may not; we may find there's nothing wrong there and that he is innocent of these charges. But we're looking at gross negligence and incompetence."

The two investigators here could not be reached for comment late Friday afternoon.

When contacted by a reporter Friday about the state investigation, Scott's wife said her husband had "nothing to say," and would not come to the telephone.

Scott's partner, Dr. Irving Root, said he "was not aware of it, either. I don't know anything about it, but that would not be at all unusual. There would be no reason why I should know about a thing like that . . . So I really have no comment one way or the other."

The board began its inquiry into Scott's performance "after we received a clipping from your newspaper (The Sun) that was sent to us by a civilian. The story concerned your county District Attorney (James Cramer) asking that Scott be barred from doing homicide autopsies."

" . . . It was not a doctor who made the complaint," Heckl said, adding that it also was not filed by any of the families who have been questioning Scott's autopsies on their relatives. "It was filed by an average citizen, 'Joe Doakes.' He sent the article in and we opened it (the investigation) up under his name as a complainant." Heckl declined to release the man's actual name.

The board is the state agency that controls the licensing of physicians in California. It has the power to revoke a doctor's license if that doctor is found guilty of negligence or incompetence.

It also can place the physician on probation — allowing him to continue practicing but with certain restrictions — or can require that

Also contributing to this story was Tina May, Sun staff writer.

he attend continuing education classes, take clinical exams and/or submit to psychological profiles, Heckl said.

"The board also can recommend that the doctor work only in a supervised, structured environment so that all his work is checked by someone else," Heckl said.

"There are a variety of disciplinary procedures the board can invoke. However, we have made no decision on this case. The investigation itself has not been completed and I really cannot give you many more details without jeopardizing the whole investigation."

"All I can tell you is that we are doing an investigation on Dr. Scott. I have no idea as to how far along that investigation is."

Coroner Bill Hill left town Thurs-

(Continued on B-3, column 1)

Weather a repeat

SAN BERNARDINO — It should be another lazy, hazy, almost-summer day today with temperatures around 87 degrees, a bit cooler than it's been most of this week.

Smog smothered most of the valley Friday, leaving the San Bernardino Mountains only a vague outline.

Temperatures should start cooling this weekend and coastal fog is expected to drift in again. Fog briefly closed two Southern California airports and hampered firefighters battling an industrial blaze in Culver City Friday morning.

It should be fair in the valley today with low clouds and fog tonight and early Sunday. Sunday afternoon should be mostly clear.

Mountain areas will be cooler with local gusts. The low desert will have westerly gusts 15 to 20 mph Sunday with highs in the mid- to upper 90s.

High deserts will be fair through Sunday with light winds and highs 85 to 92, forecasters said.

Beaches will have fog and low clouds. Highs will be around the mid-60s and overnight lows will be 48 to 55 degrees.

Hampshire flood victims file claims

By CRAIG STAATS
Sun Staff Writer

SAN BERNARDINO — A total of 61 claims totaling more than \$5.3 million were filed against the city, county and state this week by Hampshire Avenue flood victims and surrounding residents.

Some of the claims cover actual damage to homes hit by this winter's repeated flooding from Harrison Canyon, but others were filed by homeowners who say the value of their homes has dropped because they are near the flood area.

The claims — normally a first step for legal action — average about \$88,000 each. The lowest is \$30,000 and the highest \$274,000.

Frank Moore, chairman of a neighborhood disaster relief committee, said area residents filed

still be taking a wait-and-see attitude, he said.

The claims, filed Tuesday, were submitted to four jurisdictions: the City Council, the county Board of Supervisors, the state Board of Control and the county Flood Control District.

At a meeting with Hampshire homeowners earlier this week, Mayor W.R. Holcomb told them he did not blame them for filing the claims to protect their rights.

But Holcomb also said he hoped it would not trigger an adverse reaction from the City Council, which is scheduled to consider a plan for clearing the Hampshire Avenue area at Monday's meeting.

"I think it'd be improper for government to get mad at anybody who filed a claim," Holcomb said.