

«Christian Sandsdalenprisen – Mediepris»

Foreningen Retten til en verdig død has established a media prize which is awarded to journalists, writers, and other individuals who contribute, or have contributed to advance our associations work.

The Price is called «Christian Sandsdalenprisen – Mediepris» in honor to Christian Sandsdalen. He gave a lethal dose of morphine to multiple sclerosis victim Bodil Bjerkmann, 45, at her request in June 1996. He then demanded that he be tried for murder to test the laws.

He was convicted of first-degree murder in a court battle. His case went through a series of appeals before reaching the Supreme Court.

The five-member high court also upheld the lower court's decision to indefinitely postpone Sandsdalen's sentencing, which means the elderly doctor will probably never be punished due to mitigating circumstances. First-degree murder carries a maximum 21 year jail term in Norway.

The court, in a unanimous ruling, said the most important thing was to confirm that euthanasia remains illegal in Norway, no matter how good the intentions.

Previous courts had also noted that Sandsdalen believed he was doing the right thing because the woman was dying and in terrible pain. However, the courts said Sandsdalen, who retired from active practice in 1985, should have done more to find an alternative, such as prescribing stronger pain killers. He, however, was not sentenced to any punishment for having performed euthanasia.

The prize will be awarded by Foreningen Retten til en verdig død the 2. of November 2012 in conjunction with the International Day for everyone's right to die with dignity.

The prize will go to a Norwegian Author, but the name will not be released before 31. October.

*Foreningen Retten til en verdig død
Ole Peder Kjeldstadli
President*