

<https://www.tampabay28.com/news/region-hillsborough/former-guardian-rebecca-fierle-sentenced-to-4-years-probation-for-death-of-man-under-her-care>

Former guardian Rebecca Fierle sentenced to 4 years probation for death of man under her care

Former professional guardian Rebecca Fierle has agreed to plead guilty to a lesser charge after a mistrial last September. She was originally charged with causing the death of a man under her care by removing his feeding tube and signing a DNR, leading to him choking to death. Fierle was a guardian who was assigned to care for more than 750 wards.





By: [Jada Williams](#)

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HILLSBOROUGH COUNTY, Fla. — After one trial and a plea of no contest, former Florida Guardian Rebecca Fierle was sentenced to four years of probation.

Fierle had nothing to say as she left the Hillsborough County Courtroom Friday, avoiding a prison sentence.

Hillsborough County Judge Sam Ward didn't think incarceration was the best option; she called Fierle's actions "wrong."



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"A very sad situation for everyone. Defense provided a plethora of letters, and what struck me reading them all was everyone's opinion of what a great person she was. But no one addressed the fact that she's charged with a crime. The reality is what she did was wrong," Judge Ward said.

Following a trial ending in a hung jury, Fierle pleaded no contest to the charge of neglect of an elderly person. She was initially charged with causing the death of her patient, Steven Stryker, by removing his feeding tube and signing a do not resuscitate, despite hospital staff saying he told them he wanted to stay alive.



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In sentencing, the defense called five witnesses, including her two children and ex-husband. They testified Fierle was a great caretaker.

"Undoubtedly, she was one of the best guardians I ever worked with despite her large caseload," said Harry Hackney.

Judge Ward wasn't convinced.

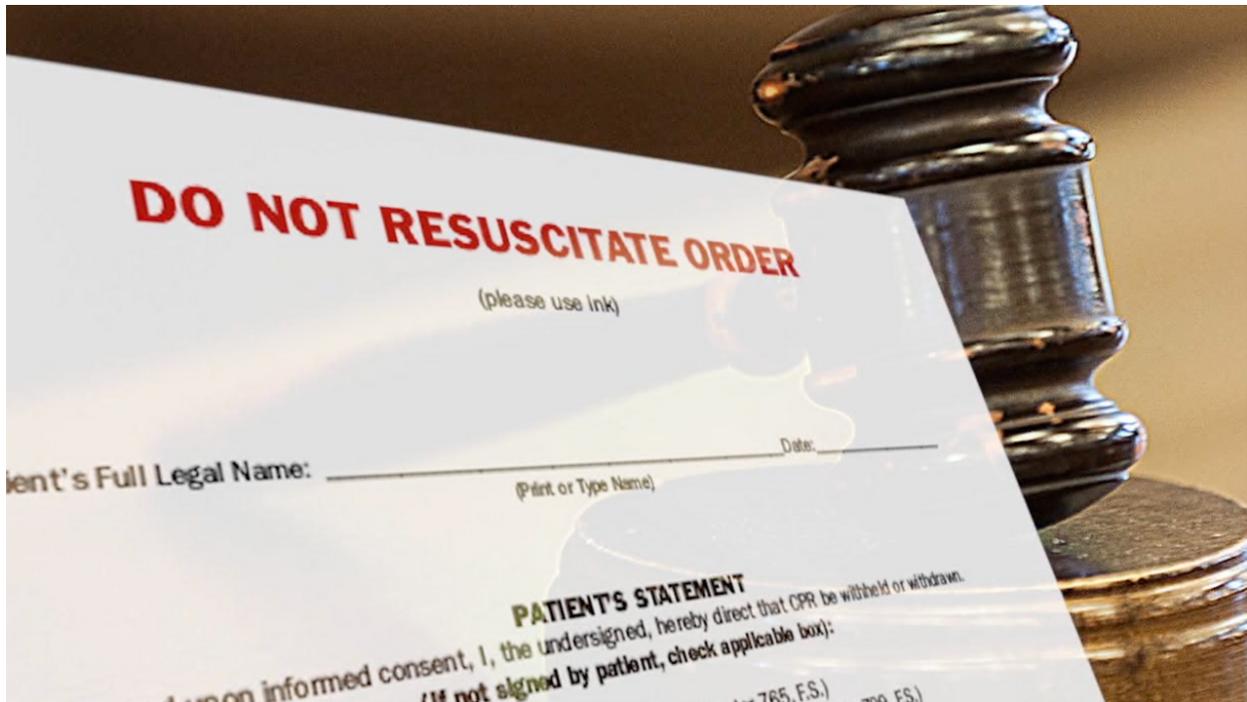


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"I can't base a sentence based on lack of acceptance of accountability. I can base a sentence on the fact that I believe she doesn't have any business going anywhere near wards of the state, elderly individuals to provide any type of service of them at all based on the conduct I heard during the course of the trial," Judge Ward said.

Hillary Hogue has vowed to fight who she sees as bad guardians in the state.

"My family was blindsided by a for-profit guardianship in Collier County. It is an underground underground operation. I fear the word guardianship more than the word cancer," she said.



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She walked out of the courtroom, disappointed with the sentence.

"It's not enough. Traci Hudson got sentenced to 8 and a half years. Fierle walked, and she did more because a human being lost their life."

While under probation, Fierle can't work any job that works closely with people in need of assistance.