

2 married couples on bomb case

1 pair works for Nichols, the other for McVeigh

By Karen Abbott

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Both Oklahoma bombing defendants now have married couples on their legal defense teams.

"What about this case is not unusual?" a spokeswoman for one of the attorneys said.

Jane Tigar, who married Michael Tigar of Austin, Texas on Oct. 22, last week filed court documents officially adding her to the defense team for Terry Nichols. Michael Tigar is Nichols' chief defense attorney.

A spokeswoman in the Nichols team's Denver office said Jane Tigar joined the Nichols team in the summer of 1995, while she still was a law student at Columbia University. She was admitted to the Colorado bar in October.

The defense team for bombing suspect Timothy McVeigh, meanwhile, includes husband-and-wife lawyers Richard Burr and Mandy Welch of Houston. Both are specialists in defending against the death penalty.

Asked about the coincidence of two married couples being involved in the case as defense lawyers, lawyer Rob Nigh of the McVeigh team said from Enid, Okla., "The case is such that you call upon every available resource."

"Dick Burr knew that one of the best people to help him was Mandy Welch," Nigh said.

McVeigh and Nichols could face death sentences if they are convicted of the April 19, 1995, bombing of Oklahoma City's Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. The blast killed 168 people and injured more than 500.

The two men will be tried in Denver's federal courthouse — McVeigh first, starting March 31. No trial date has been set for Nichols.

Each defendant has a court-appointed, taxpayer-funded defense team of about five lawyers. About 10 federal prosecutors, also paid by taxpayers, are working on the case. No side has been willing to disclose exactly how many lawyers are at work on the case, and expense records are sealed by court order until the case is over.

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