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Lawsuit seeks more than \$1 million for local woman's drowning at the Wilmington Dam

Posted on February 15, 2018



Liz Larson of Normal drowned last July when her inflatable raft went over the Wilmington Dam on the Kankakee River. Larson is the 22nd person to die at what her family's lawyer says is one of Illinois' most dangerous recreation

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Labor Day – Expanding voting rights for all

By Mike Matejka Because of COVID, there is no Labor Day Parade this year. It's always a great event for our everyday workers to march proudly down the street and enjoys the festive crowd. If there had been a parade, this year's Labor Day theme was to be "150 years of struggle: your right to vote." ...



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BLOOMINGTON – A wrongful death lawsuit has been filed by the family of a Twin-Cities woman who drowned last summer when her inflatable raft went over the Wilmington Dam on the Kankakee River.

Attorney Katherine Cardenas says Liz Larson, 36, of Normal was the 22nd person to have been killed at the dam since 1982. Cardenas says 23 other people had to be rescued from what she called one of deadliest recreational areas in the state.

The lawsuit, filed in Will County, seeks more than \$1 million in damages from Wilmington's city government, which owns the dam. Owners of a nearby motel, cottage, and canoe rental business are also named as defendants.

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By Mike Matejka As President Donald Trump threatens to send federal marshals into Chicago, over the objections of Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker, recall another Illinois Governor who protested the incursion of armed federal personnel into the city. Those federal troops, rather than calming, escalated the situation, leading to deaths and violence. Illinois poet Vachel Lindsay...

In these troubled times, to my fellow white Americans

By Mike Matejka Our nation is at a unique watershed in human relations. African-Americans have been killed too many times in the past before George Floyd, but the response to this man's death is international and all-encompassing. I was a grade-schooler during the Civil Rights 1960s. I watched Birmingham demonstrators hosed and the Selma – Montgomery...

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Looking around our community, when we say employer, most will respond to State Farm, Country, or Illinois State University. We too often forget those who are building our roads, serving our food, or our public employees. COVID-19 has made us more aware of the risk. Going to work every day for some people means...

Larson was pulled underwater by the dam's vortex, but not before she saved the life of her friend's six-year old daughter who was with Larson on the raft.

Cardenas said state officials declared the dam a public hazard more than a decade ago.

"They recommended either the removal of the dam, a modification of the dam, or for large boulders to be placed at the bottom of the dam that would take away the deadly vortex that currently exists. That was in 2007. As of 2018, the city of Wilmington has refused to make any modifications," Cardenas said.

The city claims there are enough warning signs near the dam.

"The city of Wilmington needs to take the responsibility of human life over recreation areas," said Cardenas.

"They need to stop blaming the victims. They continue to say, 'Oh, we have a sign placed, we have a sign placed.' Clearly, the signage is not working if 45 different people either died or needed to be rescued," Cardenas also said.

If repairs aren't made, Cardenas wants the city to close the public park adjacent to the dam, or prohibit canoe and kayak rentals there.