

Family of
woman killed at
assisted living
facility sues

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Lawsuit filed in stabbing death

By CAREY JOHNSON
Times Staff Writer

LOUISBURG — A relative of a woman killed by a roommate in an assisted living facility has filed a wrongful death lawsuit, alleging its operators were negligent.

Franklin County sheriff's deputies responded to The Jordan during the early morning hours of Dec. 29, 2015 to find Elouise Collier dead from knife wounds.

Her roommate, Patricia Marrow, 57 at the time, was charged with stabbing the 88-year-old woman with a steak knife.

On Aug. 4, Collier's grandniece, and administrator of her estate, Angela

Alston, filed a wrongful death lawsuit against the facility and its operators, Carolyn and John Newell.

The lawsuit, filed by Durham attorney Brandon Atwater, alleges:

- That staff noticed Marrow exhibiting an increase in psychotic behavior, which posed an immediate risk, but did not take appropriate steps to bolster safety measures at the facility;

- Staff failed to administer Marrow's anti-psychotic medication;

- On the night in question, Brandon Newell, the night staff person and the Newell's son, experienced signs of a crisis, but failed to provide medication or

take any other step to prevent Marrow from harming herself or others: (the lawsuit also alleges that Brandon Newell was not qualified for the position he filled);

- Staff was required to keep sharp items away from Marrow, but failed to secure the knife found in Marrow's possession;

- Following the death, a review by the state Division of Health Service Regulation found The Jordan to be in violation of multiple state rules, including training requirements.

Ultimately, the lawsuit alleges, DHSR found that [The Jordan] "failed to provide care and services which were adequate and appropriate" and that such failure "resulted in the death of Ms. Collier."

Prior to the incident, The Jordan had a four-star rating. Following the death, The Jordan dropped to a two-star rating and, subsequently, the E.F. Cottrell Road facility has closed.

In a previous interview, Carolyn Newell lamented the county's loss of a hospital, and its mental health facilities, as a contributing factor in the death.

It was not clear whether defendants had been served the lawsuit by press time. Immediate attempts to contact Newell were not successful.

Atwater declined comment in the pending legal matter.

The lawsuit does not specify an amount that the plaintiff is seeking.

The criminal case against Marrow remains pending as the courts try to determine her mental capacity to stand trial.

Art

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When Betty McKinne died in 2010, her work might well have been lost forever. Her old drawings — pastels of decaying barns, ripe fields and tree-lined roads that showed her talent and her love for gardening, for architecture and historic preservation — remained stored in her daughters' homes for some time after her death.

In 2014, Elizabeth McKinne began to sort through their mother's belongings and discovered many artworks she had never seen before, some of which dated to Betty McKinne's art school years at Newcomb College in New Orleans. Among these drawings were dozens of local landscapes created in, or near Franklin County from approximately 1966 to 1974.

The daughters knew this

initiated and rallied the community to save.

McKinne, a ceramics major at Newcomb College, also produced dozens of pieces of pottery from her beloved North Carolina red clay and, with help from Louisburg College Professor Hinton, explored the art of raku pottery.

McKinne loved Louisburg and Franklin County, and those who knew her marveled in her many talents.

The daughter of an artist, McKinne passed her love and passion for art to her daughters, artist Elizabeth McKinne and art historian Jane McKinne-Mayer, both accomplished in their fields. They said they are excited to be coming home to share their mother's work with the community.