

Families of Boy and His Attempted Rescuer Sue over Drowning Deaths

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COLUMBUS (Ken Hines) -- The families of a boy who died in an icy pond, as well as the man who died trying to save him, are suing the owners of the apartment complex where the tragedy occurred.

Lawyers for the families of 5-year-old Elijah Walker and 30-year-old James Russell Jenkins announced the filing of lawsuits that allege the owners of the Hartford at the Lake Apartments complex have failed to take proper safety precautions to prevent drownings in the facility's pond.



Jenkins entered the freezing water of the pond on February 7, 2013 in an effort to save Walker, sacrificing his life in an attempt to save the boy. Witnesses said Jenkins tried to swim while carrying the child, then submerged his own head while holding the boy above the water when he was unable to reach land.

People who had gathered by the pond were unable to pull Jenkins and Walker to safety. Rescue workers eventually removed them from the water, but Jenkins was already dead and Walker was fatally injured. The boy died three days later.

The plaintiffs' lawyers claim the deaths could have been prevented if Hartford's owners had used a fence or natural barriers to block access to the pond, or had warned residents about the danger.

Its a sad, sad case, and it was totally and easily preventable, said Charles E. Boyk, attorney for Jenkins's estate. This is a place that advertises and invites people to come live by and enjoy its lake."

Attorneys also accuse Hartford's owners of failing to provide rescue equipment that could have been used to save Jenkins and Walker.

"Hartford on the Lake has had every chance to rectify the issue of the pond. They have chosen not to," said Jacqueline Downey, attorney for Walker's mother. "Another life should not be sacrificed because of their negligence.

The lawyers claim six people have drowned in the Hartford on the Lake pond.

Click here for copies of the complaints filed against Hartford's owners on behalf of the families of [Jenkins](#) and [Walker](#).

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