

Family wins \$1 mil. suit against Knox College: Says school where daughter was killed lacked good security

Author(s): Bill Bird, Contributing: Karl Stampfl Naperville Sun **Date:** May 24, 2006 **Page:** 13
Section: News

Frank Racibozynski let fly Tuesday afternoon with eight bottled-up years of rage and heartbreak, and when he did, it boomed like a cannon in a cathedral. "You're darn right a million dollars isn't enough," the Naperville resident roared in response to a question about a jury's \$1.05 million award in the wrongful death lawsuit filed on behalf of his murdered daughter, Andrea Racibozynski.

"Life is priceless," Racibozynski said. "I'd give everything and another million to have her back."

At The Collins Law Firm in Naperville with his wife, Sharon, and the couple's surviving daughter, Christina, Racibozynski reflected Tuesday on the emotional loss in the wake of Andrea's slaying.

A member of Naperville Central High School's class of 1997, Andrea attended Knox College in Downstate Galesburg. There, classmate Clyde Best beat Andrea so savagely on March 28, 1998, that the murder weapon -- a brick -- broke in two.

Best, now 26 and formerly of Las Vegas, ultimately entered a plea of guilty but mentally ill in Andrea's murder. A Knox County Circuit Court judge sentenced him to 60 years in prison in 1999.

COLLEGE MAY APPEAL VERDICT

The Racibozynski family later filed a civil lawsuit against the college, maintaining school officials had failed to provide a safe environment for Andrea -- specifically poor lighting in the dormitory stairwell where she was killed and inadequate security on campus.

A Knox County jury Monday evening concurred with the Racibozynskis' contentions, returning a \$1.05 million judgment against the college. Ed Manzke, the family's chief attorney, said it is believed to be the largest civil lawsuit award in the county's history.

Karrie Heartlein, a Knox College spokeswoman, said Tuesday college officials are considering an appeal of the verdict. "... This was an unforeseeable tragedy," she said. "The college maintains changes in lighting and security would not have prevented Clyde Best's sudden and violent act."

Technical problems: If you have a technical problem with your account please contact Newsbank at 1-800-896-5587 or by e-mail at newslibrary@newsbank.com.

Return to the
Chicago Sun-Times
© Sun-Times News Group