

### **Lawsuit Filed After Inmate Death at Daviess-Dekalb Co. Jail**

#### **News**

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(stjoechannel.com) - A DeKalb County family has filed a lawsuit in the death of 36-year-old Timothy Harris, who was an inmate being held for trial at the Daviess-Dekalb County Regional Jail in Pattonsburg.



Named as defendants in the suit are jail administrator Robert Gray along with board members of the jail which include DeKalb County Commissioner Harold Allison, Daviess County Commissioner Randy Sims, DeKalb County Sheriff Wes Raines and Daviess County Sheriff Ben Becerra.

The suit also names undetermined deputies of the DeKalb County Sheriff's Department accused of assaulting Harris.

The lawsuit stems from a May 8 arrest, where Harris was taken into custody on charges of being a felon attempting to purchase a rifle.

The lawsuit alleges that during the arrest, Harris was beaten severely and shot with a taser gun on multiple occasions. Family noticed the results when Harris appeared in court four days later.

"When he was in jail there was clumps of hair missing from his head," said Janet Harris, Tim's wife.

"He was delivered to the courtroom in a wheelchair, and I was shocked," said Michele Puckett, the Harris' attorney, who is representing the family in the wrongful death suit.

The lawsuit also alleges that while in jail, Harris was kept in solitary confinement for 12 days in a cell without a toilet, sink or running water. It says Harris was forced to sit in the cell in his feces and urine.

As Harris continued his isolation in his cell, the lawsuit says his condition worsened.

"Other inmates (were) taking their commissary cards and using their money to call and pleading for medical attention (for Harris)," Puckett said.

Puckett says by the time Harris was finally allowed treatment, it was too late. Harris died while being transferred to a Kansas City hospital.

"This is so grossly depraved," Puckett said. "I've never seen anything like it."

Jail administrator Robert Gray and DeKalb County Sheriff Wes Raines would not comment on the case. However, DeKalb County Commissioner Harold Allison did speak to KQ2 and said he's waiting for an autopsy report which could take up to four more weeks.

"We don't really know for sure what's happened," Allison said. "This individual passed away. Other than that, we're waiting for the reports to come back."

For the family, there is only sadness and anger.

"At 31, I became a widow because of these people," Janet Harris said. "I hate them. I've never hated anything so much in my life. He was my best friend, my husband, my confidant, my world. He was more than just my husband."

"He was my only child," said Chelo Banks, Tim Harris' mother. "He adored his children and wife beyond belief. I will do what I can to tear that facility apart brick by brick. They will be held accountable."

The lawsuit also claims Harris' arrest was a set up by law enforcement. Puckett said Harris was arrested as retribution for him criticizing law enforcement on social media for their handling of an issue with his daughter at her school.