

Two Families File Wrongful Death Suits Against UAH and Amy Bishop

On behalf of Johnston, Moore & Thompson

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The families of two of the people killed last year in the UAH shooting allegedly perpetrated by former professor Dr. Amy Bishop have filed [wrongful death](#) lawsuits against Bishop, her husband, and the university's provost. In addition to Bishop, the families hold University of Alabama Huntsville provost Dr. Vistasp M. Karbhari for the deaths of their loved ones because, they allege, he failed to follow procedures that could have saved their lives.

The University plans to vigorously defend Karbhari, and released a statement today insisting that he could have done nothing to prevent the shootings.

Last February 12, Bishop allegedly opened fire at a biology department meeting, killing three colleagues and injuring three others.

Wrongful Death Lawsuits Do Apply to Intentional Acts Such as Murder

It is not unusual for survivors to file wrongful death lawsuits against the perpetrators of violence. Deaths by [intentional acts](#) are perhaps the most serious of all injuries caused by others, and the law allows victims to seek monetary compensation for their losses.

The families of the two victims who filed lawsuits also allege that negligence contributed to their loved ones' deaths. An article in the Huntsville Times did not specify what negligence Bishop's husband allegedly committed. However, the lawsuits claim that Provost Karbhari had a legal duty to protect university employees and students from foreseeable acts of violence, and that he was negligent in failing to do so.

"There are clear parallels between this case and Saturday's massacre in Arizona," says a lawyer representing both families. "We have learned from departmental emails that Dr. Bishop's severe mental instability was known by administrators, some of whom she had threatened, harassed and hounded following denial of tenure."

"The University of Alabama Huntsville Provost had clear obligations under UAH regulations, and standards adopted by universities nationwide following previous high-profile massacres, to obtain intervention by university police and counseling services in order to protect staff and students before Dr. Bishop was allowed into a staff meeting where she gunned down her colleagues," he said.

The University released a statement this morning responding to the allegations that Provost Karbhari's negligence allowed the shooting spree to go forward. While expressing deep regret for the injuries and deaths, the University believes that only one person can be held responsible for the events of February 12: The murderer.

"The university is saddened by the decision to sue Dr. Vistasp Karbhari and does not agree that Dr. Karbhari, or anyone associated with the university, could have predicted or prevented this random act of violence. The university will vigorously defend this lawsuit and is confident that the outcome will exonerate Dr. Karbhari."

The University also stressed that it has worked diligently with those injured and the families of those killed to ensure they obtain all available work-related benefits.

Source: The Huntsville Times, "[Families of two killed in UAH shooting file wrongful death suit against provost and Amy Bishop](#)," Victoria Cumbow, January 14, 2011