

# PRESS ENTERPRISE

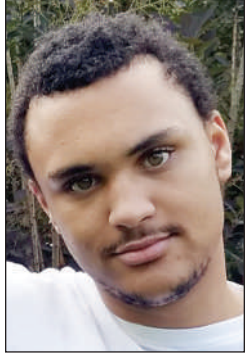
BOUDMAN, EYERLY AND LONGENBERGER OBITUARIES PAGE 4

SUNDAY, MAY 10, 2020

\$2

## Suit: Staff watched inmate die

### Columbia guards incompetent, untrained, federal case alleges



**TYLER EVANS**

By **MICHAEL LESTER**  
 Press Enterprise Writer

WILLIAMSPORT — Columbia County prison guards showed a “shocking level of incompetence” and “complete lack of adequate training” as they watched a mentally ill teen die while strapped in a restraint chair for more than 20 hours, according to a recently filed lawsuit.

Police brought Tyler Jay Evans, 19, to the prison during the early hours of June 1, 2019, for a probation violation. He had tested positive for methamphetamine after Briar Creek Township Police were called to break up a dispute between Evans and stepfather Justin Ruskuski at their home. Prison guards strapped Evans, who was on probation for a May

2019 disorderly conduct conviction, into a restraint chair shortly after his arrival. Guards described Evans as high, suicidal and combative. They kept him restrained for 22 hours, according to the lawsuit, filed in federal court on behalf of Evans’ great-grandmother Judy Evans. “Once restrained in the chair, Tyler Evans spent most of the next

22 hours in distress, struggling against the restraints for any freedom of movement and crying out in vain to speak with his ‘mommy,’” the suit, filed by Philadelphia lawyers David Caputo and Zachary Arbitman, states.

**‘They did nothing’**

Judy Evans alleges prison Please see **INMATE** page 4



**JUDY EVANS**

## New mom allays virus fears

### Berwick woman says tests, precautions and care eased concerns

By **HAYLEY ZAVISLAK**  
 Press Enterprise Writer

BLOOMSBURG — Tiffany Polizzi is celebrating Mother’s Day with an addition this year — a baby girl born during a global pandemic.

And with the experience of having three other children, Polizzi said her only concern was if she would have to be alone in the delivery room.

But Polizzi, 39, of Berwick says expectant mothers shouldn’t worry too much.

Moms-to-be are able to have one support person in the delivery room with them at Geisinger-Bloomsburg Hospital.

However, that person isn’t allowed to leave the hospital, said Geisinger midwife Jessica Lennon.

“Once you were there, you stay,” Polizzi said.

And the staff kept her updated on their changing policies, she added.

**It’s time**

On April 3, Polizzi said she went into labor and was told by Lennon that she should come to the hospital.

Polizzi and her fiancé Adam Jackson were ushered into the virus testing tent outside the hospital.

All expectant mothers admitted for delivery undergo a nasal swab for COVID-19 on admission, Lennon said.

They’re placed in isolation until test results are available, which takes around an hour, she added.

Polizzi said she and Jackson were given bands to wear around their wrists that signified they were screened and tested



**TIFFANY POLIZZI** of Berwick holds month-old **Lyndsey Jackson**, who was born at Geisinger-Bloomsburg Hospital.



**LYNDSLEY JACKSON** is seen in a very early portrait.

negative. They welcomed Lyndsey Jackson to the world

at around 10:30 a.m., Polizzi said.

Family members were not allowed to come visit, something Polizzi said she could accept.

“For some people it’s overwhelming to not have family, which obviously we would like to, but actually it was kind of nice,” she said.

Since Jackson was not allowed to leave, Polizzi said he was given a meal with each one she received.

The two left the hospital with their newborn just 24 hours later with the help of three nurses,



**ADAM JACKSON** of Berwick holds baby **Lyndsey**. **PHOTOS SPECIAL TO PRESS ENTERPRISE**

Polizzi said.

She said the nurses helped the couple pack up the car and “took care of them.”

“With three kids and two businesses, we were ready to go,” she joked. She owns Tiffany’s Downtown in Bloomsburg and Tiffany’s Subs in Orangeville. Her other children are Chloe Shultz, 18; Carter Polizzi, 14, and Tyler Polizzi, 10.

**Trust**

Lyndsey’s first doctor appointment was also at Geisinger-Bloomsburg, and Polizzi admitted she

had been a “little upset” at having to take the newborn out into the world.

But the pediatrician was seeing only newborns at the time, she said.

“My questions were always taken care of and we had the whole office to ourselves,” Polizzi said.

To expectant mothers worried about giving birth in the next few months, Polizzi said to have trust.

“Trust that your provider is gonna do the best for you and give you the best care under these circumstances,” she said.

“We have the best in- Please see **MOM** page 6

## Feds: Spin led to Fair helicopter accident

By **MICHAEL LESTER**  
 Press Enterprise Writer

BLOOMSBURG — Pilot Ken Cordrey was preparing to land a helicopter after his final sightseeing loop on the last day of the Bloomsburg Fair when things went horribly wrong.

The three-seat Enstrom F-28F helicopter began to spin and crashed into the lot and parked vehicles, landing on its left side. Its fuselage, tail boom, main and tail rotors were heavily damaged.

Cordrey suffered injuries that left him in critical condition for a time.

Two female passengers from Lycoming County were treated for minor injuries.

Those are findings in a National Transportation Safety Board report filed April 29 after an investigation of the Sept. 28 crash.

NTSB investigators found no evidence of any catastrophic engine failure, and the helicopter was flying with 220 pounds less than the 2,600-pound maximum allowable.

But the report notes the Federal Aviation Administration issued an advisory in February 1995 about “unanticipated right yaw,” or spin, in helicopters like Cordrey experienced.

**The story of the crash**

Cordrey, 70, had just completed a routine 3-minute flight above the fairgrounds and was approaching the paved grounds’ helipad, according to the report.

He told investigators it was his final approach to the helipad just before 8 p.m. on a clear, calm Saturday.

“The helicopter ‘just yawed right,’ and he said he did ‘everything I could to recover, with left pedal,’ but the action ‘did not stop the yaw,’” the report states.

The report says Cordrey “could not recall what the power settings were, or how high the helicopter was above ground Please see **HELICOPTER** page 5

■ **Photo**  
**Page 5**

**WEATHER**

TODAY: Turning cloudy  
 HIGH TEMP: 61°  
 PRECIPITATION: 25%  
 TONIGHT: Mainly cloudy  
 LOW TEMP: 42°  
 PRECIPITATION: 55%  
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## Cops: Homeless man pulled knife, made threats

### Alleged victim jumped from second-story window, said he feared for his life

By **LEON BOGDAN**  
 Press Enterprise Writer

BLOOMSBURG — A homeless man was jailed last weekend on charges he threatened to kill another man with a knife at the victim’s residence, arrest papers say.

Byron Bilby Jr., 31, denied pulling a knife on Glenn Teichberg

and told police he didn’t know why Teichberg jumped out of a second-story bedroom window when officers arrived at his home at 223 Railroad St. on April 30, according to a complaint.

Teichberg said he feared for his life when allegedly confronted by Bilby holding a small knife in his hand and telling him, “I’m going

to kill you!”

He said Bilby appeared to be distraught over recently breaking up with a girlfriend whom he believed he could hear inside Teichberg’s house.

Teichberg said Bilby and the woman had been at his residence in the past and were told to leave when they got into an argument.

Bilby returned on the morning of the alleged threats and asked if he could sleep there after spending the night in the rain.

He also accused Teichberg of being together with the girlfriend and believed she was in the house because “I can hear her,” arrest papers say.

Teichberg told him he could stay and sleep on a couch before Please see **KNIFE** page 6



## Happy Mother’s Day

### from First Keystone Community Bank

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www.fkc.bank **FDIC**

## Warren Richard Longenberger

Welder was member of NRA



Warren Richard "Dick" Longenberger, 90, of Berwick passed away peacefully Friday, May 8, 2020, at the Pavilion at St. Luke Village in Hazleton following a battle with dementia.

Born in Berwick on February 7, 1930, he was a son to the late Clyde and Nelia (Dietterick) Longenberger.

Dick attended Berwick Area schools and graduated in 1948. Following graduation, he began working at the AC&F as a welder until he was drafted into the U.S. Army in February 1951. Having been honorably and medically discharged later that year, he returned to the AC&F. He remained there until it closed in 1962. He then worked for Crispin-Multiplex for more than 40 years, until his retirement in 2008.

In November 1952, Dick married the love of his life, the former Grace "Gracie" Keck. They shared 64 years of marriage prior to her passing in May 2017. In their younger years, they had enjoyed motorcycling. Together, they traveled extensively throughout the Northeastern United States on their bike.

For nearly his entire working life, Dick had been a welder. He had the ability to fix nearly anything and make it like new.

Dick was member of Evansville United Methodist Church, the Berwick Moose and the NRA.

He enjoyed spending time with his family and friends, by whom he will be deeply missed.

Warren is survived by his daughter: Debra Greenly and fiancé Gregory Ash, of Berwick; grandsons: Drew Harmon and wife Ashley, of Numidia and Eric Jaffin of Berwick; great-granddaughter Malania Harmon; sister-in-law: Mary Ellen Farrell; brothers-in-law: Dale Keck and Ray Keck; nephew: James Farrell, of whom he thought very highly; cousin Harvey Longenberger; and numerous nieces, nephews and cousins.

Dick is now reunited with Grace, whom he missed dearly. He was also preceded in death by a brother: Kenneth Longenberger and sisters: Ruth Bredbenner and Bessie Longenberger, who passed in infancy.

Dick's family would like to express their gratitude to his caregivers: Ellen, Melissa, Bethany, Jane, Michelle and Virginia. They allowed him to live in his own home almost until the time of his passing. They would also like to thank the staff of The Pavilion at St. Luke Village for their care and kindness. His stay there was brief, but he was well taken care of.

As a consequence of current pandemic restrictions, Dick's interment at Rose Lawn Cemetery in Berwick is private.

Memorial contributions in Dick's name can be made to Evansville United Methodist Church, 8 Lights Road, Berwick, PA 18603.

The Kelchner, McMichael & Readler Funeral Home, Inc. is honored to serve Dick's family. Online messages of love and support can be left at [www.kelchnerfuneralhome.com](http://www.kelchnerfuneralhome.com).

## Miriam E. (Knorr) Boudman

Additional information to come later

Miriam E. (Knorr) Boudman, 88, formerly of Benton, died early Saturday morning, May 9, 2020, at The Gardens at Orangeville.

Additional obituary information and arrangements will be announced in a future edition of the Press Enterprise by the McMichael Funeral Home, Inc., of Benton.

## Inmate

Continued from front page

guards did next to nothing to save Tyler's life as they watched his breathing diminish before he fell into a state of unconsciousness.

"Tyler Evans was dying right in front of" guards Patrick Zielecki and Brent Harner, "and they did nothing more than stand idly by and watch," the lawsuit states.

Tyler Evans died inside the prison at 3:13 a.m. June 2, less than 24 hours after he was brought in.

Columbia County Coroner Jeremy Reese ruled Evans died of "complications of an excited state associated with methamphetamine toxicity and restraint chair confinement."

A jury seated during a February coroner's inquest into Evans' death determined his death was accidental, a decision that incensed Judy Evans.

She now hopes a federal jury takes her side in the death of her late great-grandson, claiming prison guards violated his civil rights.

Her suit against Columbia County also lists as defendants prison Warden David Varano and several prison guards and a nurse.

The suit does not specify the amount of money Judy Evans is seeking in compensatory and punitive damages.

### 'Called a retard'

"From the moment he arrived at the prison, Tyler Evans was insulted and mocked; he was called a 'retard' among other derogatory and offensive terms," the suit states.

Tyler had "severe intellectual disability and mental illness from a very early age," according to the suit.

He was under psychiatric care and taking medications for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and oppositional defiant disorder.

Judy Evans has said Tyler could neither read nor write and had the intelligence of a 10-year-old.

"His intellectual limitations and psychiatric conditions made Tyler Evans prone to behavior that led to occasional encounters with law enforcement," the suit states.

"Notwithstanding his intel-

lectual and emotional challenges and the troubles they sometimes caused, Tyler Evans had the capacity for love and joy, and he was cherished by his mother, stepfather, plaintiff Judy Evans and other family."

### 'Rambling'

Briar Creek Township Police were called to the home of Evans' mother, Tylee, and stepfather Ruskuski, just after midnight June 1 for a report of a fight between Tyler and his stepfather.

When Tyler was brought to the prison that morning, guards there were familiar with him. He had been locked up there for three days in March after he allegedly shoved a pair of police officers during a violent incident at his home.

Before taking Tyler to the prison, Briar Creek police had him provide a urine sample for a drug screening, then took him for a psychiatric evaluation at Geisinger-Bloomsburg Hospital.

Police say Tyler made suicidal comments after his arrest.

Emergency room doctor Jed Ritter determined he was "mildly intoxicated" and "rambling with poor eye contact but states that he had no plan as to how he would hurt himself and denies current suicidal ideation," the suit states.

Ritter nonetheless recommended Tyler be placed on suicide watch at the prison for the 24 hours that followed, the suit states.

The suit contends Tyler was verbally combative after his arrest but never physically combative with police.

Police and prison guards testified in February, however, that Evans was high, suicidal, screaming and crying incoherently and physically flailing following his arrest.

"In five years, I've never seen an inmate come in this state," Warden Varano testified.

### 'Improper use' of chair

The suit says guards strapped Tyler into a restraint chair at 4:15 a.m. June 1 "without any legitimate justification." It says a restraint chair is neither an appropriate nor recognized method of suicide watch.

Defendant Jared Cunfer "and the correctional officers who strapped Tyler Evans

into the restraint chair at 4:15 a.m. either made a deliberate decision to use the restraint chair improperly as a form of suicide watch or they were so poorly trained by Columbia County and Warden [David] Varano that they did not know that it was improper to use the chair for this purpose," the suit states.

The suit alleges a series of prison policy missteps and violations by guards after Evans was strapped into the chair:

- They failed to notify the warden they were strapping Evans into the restraint chair, and didn't complete a restraint chair log that includes a screening process to justify restraint.

- They failed to video the use of force as required by policy.

- They violated a prison policy that sets a two-hour limit for the restraint chair in the event a restrained inmate is not being medically supervised or the warden has not approved a longer restraint period.

Warden Varano testified at the coroner's inquest that officers failed to get his permission to extend Evans' time in the restraint chair beyond eight hours.

### 'Agitated'

Judy Evans' lawyers viewed surveillance video from the prison recorded during Tyler's incarceration.

By the 14th hour in the restraint chair, Evans "continued to be agitated and distressed, frequently pleading to speak with his 'mommy,'" the lawsuit states.

"Yet, despite Tyler Evans's pre-existing mental health disorders and obvious anguish, no mental health representative was contacted, and the warden still had not been notified of Tyler Evans's continued restraint."

Prison nurse Serena Novotney testified at the inquest that she was concerned about Evans' behavior when she spoke to a nurse at Geisinger-Bloomsburg Hospital. The Geisinger nurse testified that the prison could return him to the hospital for evaluation, according to the lawsuit.

Evans never was returned to the hospital, and no medical staff was on duty at the prison once Novotney's shift ended, the suit states.

"Columbia County's failure to have any medical staff

## OBITUARIES

### Richard M. Eyerly

1955 graduate of Bloomsburg High School



Richard M. Eyerly, age 82, formerly of Columbia Avenue, Bloomsburg, died at 7:05 a.m. Thursday, May 7, 2020, at The Gardens of Orangeville where he resided since November 2018.

Born in Bloomsburg on November 10, 1937, he was a son of the late Marland E. and Margaret V. (Linker) Eyerly. He was a 1955 graduate of Bloomsburg High School and also attended the former Bloomsburg State College.

Richard worked at the former Magee Carpet, Bloomsburg, on two occasions for a total of 37 years, retiring in 2000. In between his employment at Magee, he was employed by the Kawneer Corp., Bloomsburg, for several years. He was a lifelong member of St. Matthew Lutheran Church, Bloomsburg.

In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by a brother, Gordon Eyerly.

Richard is survived by a son, Mark Eyerly, and his wife, Kathleen, of Downingtown and a daughter, Marilyn, wife of Robert Lockard, Narvon; four grandchildren: Isabella Eyerly, Katherine Eyerly, Kevin Lockard, Heather Lockard, and his former wife of 50 years, Patricia (Kile) Eyerly of Gordonville.

Private services will be held. Interment will be in Elan Memorial Park, Lime Ridge.

Arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Dean W. Kriner, Inc., Funeral Home & Cremation Service, 325 Market St., Bloomsburg.

Condolence messages and photographs may be posted at: [www.krinerfuneralhopmes.com](http://www.krinerfuneralhopmes.com)



Special to Press Enterprise

### SIGN OF SUMMER

A cowbird, a sign of approaching summer, perches in a mulberry tree in a Berwick backyard in this photo by **Brittany Kershner**.

**SEND A PHOTO:** If you snap an interesting photo you'd like to share with our readers, go to our website, [pressenterpriseonline.com](http://pressenterpriseonline.com), and click on "SUBMIT PHOTO."

# Cancer claims rock pioneer Little Richard

By KRISTIN M. HALL  
AP Entertainment Writer

### Hall of Fame

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Little Richard, whose piercing wail, pounding piano and towering pompadour altered popular music while introducing black R&B to white America, died Saturday after battling bone cancer. He was 87.

His son, Danny Jones Penniman, confirmed the death.

Bill Sobel, Little Richard's attorney, said the musician died of bone cancer in Tullahoma, Tennessee.

"He was not only an iconic and legendary musician, but he was also a kind, empathetic, and insightful human being," Sobel praised.

### 'Race music'

Born Richard Penniman, Little Richard was one of rock 'n' roll's founding fathers, joining Chuck Berry and Fats Domino in bringing what was once called "race music" into the mainstream. Richard's piano playing coupled with his howling vocals and hairdo made him an implausible sensation — a gay, black man celebrated across America during the buttoned-down Eisenhower era.

His influence on other musicians was staggering, from the Beatles and Otis Redding to Creedence Clearwater Revival and David Bowie.

It was 1956 when his classic "Tutti Frutti" landed like a hand grenade in the Top 40, exploding from radios and off turntables across the country. It was highlighted by Richard's memorable call of "wop-bop-a-loo-bop-a-loo-bam-boom."

A string of hits followed, providing the foundation of rock music: "Lucille," "Keep A Knockin'," "Long Tall Sally," "Good Golly Miss Molly."

When the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame opened in 1986, he was among the charter members with Elvis Presley, Berry, Buddy Holly, Jerry Lee Lewis, Sam Cooke and others.

"I am the architect of rock 'n' roll!" Little Richard crowed at the 1988 Grammy Awards.

### Religious background

Richard Wayne Penniman was born in Macon, Georgia, during the Great Depression, one of 12 children. He was ostracized because he was effeminate and suffered a small deformity: his right leg was shorter than his left.

The family was religious, and Richard sang in local churches.

Penniman was performing with bands by 14, but there were problems at home over his sexual orientation.

In his personal life, he wavered between raunch and religion. A conflicted Richard quit the business in 1957 to enroll in a theological school and get married.

A 1962 arrest for a sexual encounter with a man in a bus station restroom led to his divorce and return to performing.

He mounted three tours of England between 1962 and 1964, with the Beatles and the Rolling Stones as opening acts. He fired guitarist Jimi Hendrix when he was late for a bus.

By the mid-1970s, Richard was battling a \$1,000-a-day cocaine problem and returned to religion.

"If God can save an old homosexual like me, he can save anybody," Richard said.

In 1986, Little Richard was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, and appeared in the movie "Down and Out in Beverly Hills."



PENNIMAN

breathing, defendant Cunfer and defendant Zielecki poured water into his open mouth," the lawsuit states.

When Evans still didn't respond, officers called 9-1-1.

"Over the next eleven minutes, correctional officers continued to observe Tyler Evans and check his pulse before finally removing him from the restraint chair at 2:25 a.m. and laying him on the cell block floor," the lawsuit states.

"Not until approximately 2:25 a.m. — approximately 40 minutes after defendants Harner and Zielecki first noticed 'lessened breathing,' 24 minutes after defendant Zielecki first got no response from Tyler Evans after shaking him, and 11 minutes after Defendant Cunfer felt no pulse — did any correctional officer commence CPR."

Paramedics arrived and took over efforts to resuscitate Evans.

Those efforts failed, and Tyler Evans was pronounced dead at 3:13 a.m. June 2.

David MacMain, the West Chester lawyer representing Columbia County in the dispute, did not respond to an email message about the suit.

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