

## Family of Lafayette College freshman struck by Jeep sues school, crew coaches

*By Sarah Cassi | lehighvalleylive.com*

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The family of a Lafayette College freshman who was struck and badly injured in a hit-and-run crash say the school failed to address an unsafe situation for rowers that ultimately led to their daughter's incapacitating injuries.

A negligence suit filed last week in Lehigh County Court blames Lafayette College and crew team coaches for misleading students about the dangers of walking on Lehigh Drive to and from practice.

Aubrey Baumbach, of Sudbury, Mass., suffered severe brain injuries when a Jeep struck her Nov. 8 as she walked along the Easton road with other members of Lafayette College's club crew team following practice, the lawsuit says.

The suit says Baumbach is incapacitated and Lisa and Richard Baumbach became her legal guardians in January; they filed the lawsuit on her behalf.

It is not immediately clear why the Baumbachs' filed the lawsuit in Lehigh, not Northampton County.

**Thomas Kline**, the Baumbachs' attorney, did not respond to a request for comment.

Roger Clow, a college spokesman, could not be reached immediately for comment about the suit. He previously said school officials planned to review safety measures at Lafayette's Lehigh River boathouse following the crash.

The suit claims the school did not provide transportation to the boathouse, a safe passage way to get there or enough parking for students who drove there. On the day of the crash, a car was blocking the adjacent parking lot, so the car in which Aubrey Baumbach was riding had to park farther away, the suit says.

When practice ended at 6 p.m., Aubrey Baumbach was walking with teammates along Lehigh Drive single file when she was struck, the suit says. The impact "propelled her into the air and threw her approximately 20 feet, causing her to land on the edge of Lehigh Drive," the lawsuit says.

Aubrey Baumbach was taken to St. Luke's University Hospital, Fountain Hill, with "catastrophic injuries," the suit says, including severe traumatic brain injuries and fractured vertebrae. She incurred substantial medical expenses that continue to mount, the suit says.

The suit claims the college and coaches intentionally misled students that it was safe for crew members to walk along Lehigh Drive, even though there had been a fatal crash on Lehigh Drive in August.

The suit names Lafayette College; Richard Kelliher, head coach of the men's and women's rowing programs at the Easton college; and assistant coach Allison Sobiech.

Using surveillance footage and witness accounts, Easton police managed to link the vehicle to Wilson D. Kneebone, of Lower Mount Bethel Township. Kneebone was driving with a suspended license because of a prior drunk-driving charge, according to court records.

Kneebone is charged in the crash with felony counts of accidents involving injury, accidents involving injury without proper licensing and aggravated assault by vehicle, as well as a summary charge of driving with a suspended license.

Kneebone remains in prison in lieu of \$85,000 bail. His next court appearance is scheduled for July 7. It is also not clear why Kneebone was not named in the Baumbachs' lawsuit.

Aubrey Baumbach's family and friends continue to support her through her recovery via a Facebook page started by her family called Aubrey's Odyssey.