



Parents of student killed in Penn State hazing sue fraternity brothers

By
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Feb. 2 (UPI) -- The parents of a student killed in a hazing incident at Penn State University have settled with the school but filed suit against 28 former fraternity brothers and a security firm hired at the party.

The [99-page federal lawsuit](#) was filed Friday, one day before the two-year anniversary of an alcohol-based hazing incident that led to the death of Timothy Piazza.

[In September](#), the family settled with the national fraternity, Beta Theta Pi, for undisclosed terms.

Terms of the financial settlement with Penn State were not revealed by the parents, Jim and Evelyn Piazza and their lawyer, **Thomas R. Kline** of [Kline & Spector](#), or the university.

The settlement with Penn State includes making the school safer for students, including a trained adult, living in fraternity and sorority houses, and installing security cameras on their premises. The school pledged to continue the permanent ban of Beta Theta Pi from campus. It changes the wording of its Greek life activities, including no longer using "pledge" or

"pledging" on its website, instead saying "new member" or "new member affiliation activities."

"This leaves the civil suit to focus on holding accountable the individuals who planned and participated in the reckless hazing activities which caused Tim's death," Kline said in a statement Friday. "We expect this federal lawsuit to result in a trial to determine the shared responsibility of all those who contributed to the needless and senseless tragedy."

On Feb. 2, 2017, the sophomore engineering major from New Jersey drank heavy amounts of alcohol at a pledge party as part of a hazing ritual. He later fell down a flight of stairs in the early morning hours.

No one called for help for nearly 12 hours and he died on Feb. 4.

Afterward, several fraternity members were charged. Involuntary manslaughter and aggravated assault charges were thrown out in Centre County Court.

And 23 former Beta Theta Pi members have entered pleas to charges including hazing, conspiracy to commit hazing, and furnishing alcohol to minors, Joe Grace, a spokesman for the Attorney General's Office, said this month. Three cases are open.

The lawsuit includes six counts of negligence, six counts of battery, a civil conspiracy and infliction of emotional distress.

The suit alleges members of planning and orchestrating the hazing event that led to Piazza's death.

Also named is St. Moritz Security Systems Inc., which monitored fraternity parties for Penn State's Interfraternity Council.

The suit says fraternity brothers "negligently, recklessly, and outrageously forced, coerced, encouraged, or otherwise caused ... Piazza to consume life-threatening amounts of alcohol, and caused him to become intoxicated, fall, and suffer grievous injuries and death."

Judgments could be lodged against the young men and would "need to be paid with assets that they have now or in the future."

However, Rocco Cipparone Jr., who represents a defendant, told [Trib Live](#) the parents' homeowner policies could cover negligence of those who live in the home.