

► DEATH

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wrongfully accused with the theory that Jocai had died because of “shaken baby syndrome.”

Kerlus declined to speak with the Review-Journal after the hearing but later sent a statement through her attorney. Kerlus wrote in the statement that “shaken baby syndrome” often leads to “flawed convictions.”

“After four years of fighting for my truth, fighting for my kids, my case is dismissed and now I can work on healing from this trauma,” she said in the statement.

Jobe declined to comment on the case, and directed questions to Clark County District Attorney Steve Wolfson, who did not reply to a request for comment.

In July 2019, the Clark County coroner’s office ruled Jocai’s death a homicide caused by blunt force head and neck trauma. The coroner’s office confirmed Wednesday that the boy’s cause and manner of death have not changed.

The coroner’s office determined Jocai had hemorrhaging in his brain, eye area and spinal cord, swelling in his brain and healing nerve fractures, according to Kerlus’ arrest report.

But Helmick said during the hearing that the defense spoke with multiple medical experts who believed Jocai died of natural causes as a complication of sickle cell anemia, a disease that causes abnormally shaped red blood cells.

Helmick said Jocai’s heart was enlarged, and he suffered a ruptured artery in his brain, which then caused a lack of blood flow and



Kristina Kerlus, who was accused of murder in the death of her baby son, reacts Wednesday outside court after her case was dismissed at the Regional Justice Center.

cardiac arrest.

The arrest report indicates that Jocai was born premature and underweight. He was a carrier for sickle cell anemia and was scheduled to see a specialist for the blood disease shortly before his death, the report said.

Jocai died at University Medical Center on Oct. 7, 2018, two days after the baby was rushed to Sumnerlin Hospital Medical Center in cardiac arrest and was diagnosed with a brain bleed, according to a police report.

The boy’s father had woken up that morning to the baby lying on

his stomach and noticed Jocai was “crying and seemed irritated,” the report said. When Jocai stopped responding, he splashed water on the baby’s face and called Kerlus, who told him to call 911.

Kerlus was arrested and booked into the Clark County Detention Center after the coroner’s office ruled Jocai’s death a homicide. The officer who wrote the arrest report did not indicate what, if anything, police believe Kerlus did to cause Jocai’s injuries.

After Kerlus’ arrest, her sister told the Review-Journal that Kerlus was innocent and that the baby was

injured two weeks before his death at a day care provider.

On Oct. 4, the day before Jocai was rushed to the hospital, Kerlus told police that the baby spent the night next to her on a mattress on the carpeted floor of the home they had just moved into. At one point, she woke up to find Jocai on the ground “like he rolled off,” but he acted “completely fine,” according to the arrest report.

Jocai’s father told police that Kerlus had sent him a video of Jocai that evening and then sent a picture in which it appeared that the baby was sleeping, the report said.

The officer who authored the report and viewed the photo noted that in the picture Jocai “was slumped forward and his color looked off,” the report said.

Kerlus was released from custody after posting a \$100,000 bail shortly after her arrest, court records show.

She was seen crying after Wednesday’s court hearing, upset over the possibility that prosecutors could charge her in the future. Helmick said during the hearing that the case has no statute of limitations.

“She has this gray cloud that’s still going to hang over her head for the rest of her life,” he told the judge.

The judge said she did not believe she has the authority to order prosecutors to change how the case was dismissed.

“You’ve obtained a pretty miraculous result already with them agreeing to dismiss it voluntarily,” Kierny said.

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► VIRUSES

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the holidays.

Wednesday’s update also showed that the number of patients hospitalized in Clark County and statewide continued to fall slightly, with confirmed or suspected cases decreasing to 279 from last week’s 294. The number of hospitalizations statewide also decreased to 327 from 345.

Clark County is experiencing

medium community levels of COVID-19 for the third week in a row, according to a federal designation from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention that tracks hospitalizations and severity of disease.

But the county’s community transmission levels, or a measure of what viruses are circulating within the community, has risen, according to Franich.

“We know that we have substantial to high transmission within our community,” she said.

Other Nevada counties such as Esmeralda, Lincoln, Nye and White Pine are also seeing medium community levels of disease, with the rest of the state’s counties at a low level.

The health district continues to recommend mitigation efforts such as mask-wearing, washing hands and staying home while sick despite the pressures of the holiday season, Franich said.

Those same mitigation strategies probably helped to prevent the spread of other respiratory illnesses like RSV over the past two years, she said.

Trends in some surrounding states have shown a slowdown in rates of RSV, and the health district is hopeful that Nevada will mirror those numbers, Franich said.

While respiratory illnesses continue to circulate all over the country, she reiterated that, while there is no vaccine currently available for RSV, individuals can also still get their flu shot and the COVID-19 booster if eligible.

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OBITUARIES

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BARRON, YSIDRO R SUTHERLAND, DARLA RICE

In Memoriam DICKENS, DAVID

DARLA RICE SUTHERLAND

Darla Mae Rice Bates Sutherland was born in Hendersonville, North Carolina to Alfred Alvin and Lillian Davis Rice, the oldest of 5 children. Her siblings were Hiram, Randy, Paula, and Alvin. She loved to sing and perform and was a nightclub headliner and model in Washington, D.C., where she met her husband Jack Bates. Together they had three daughters Tera Duncan, Tracey Long, and Trina Boice. After moving to San Jose, CA and later divorcing she married Vance Sutherland. She worked as a real estate agent, and executive secretary for NEC. They later moved to Las Vegas, Nevada to work for the Rice family business Multipure Corporation. She passed November 26, 2022 and will be buried in the Southern Nevada Veterans Cemetery next to her marine husband Vance. She leaves 12 grandchildren and 6 great-grandchildren.

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YSIDRO R BARRON
It is with much sorrow that our loving husband and father Ysidro Barron passed away on December 15, 2022 in Henderson NV. Ysidro was born in Tucson, AZ in 1955 to Ysidro R Barron II and Adela Valdez Barron. After graduating from Tucson High School, Ysidro attended Yale University, graduating with a degree in Architecture.

Ysidro married Ann Kindel in Tucson in 1981. They moved to Las Vegas to begin his career in architecture which he continued until his passing. He built his own architectural practice focusing and contributing to the built environment of schools, public housing, civic, hospitality and other community environments. He is remembered by those in his industry as a hands on mentor who lead by example.

Ysidro accomplished many things and was always very proud of the family he built and loved. Those who knew him will remember him as a fun loving person who was the life of the party. He loved entertaining friends at the bar he built in his home.

An avid athlete, Ysidro was a sports fan and always rooted for his Green Bay Packers and loved Las Vegas sports teams. Friends will remember his love of squash and golfing at the Black Mountain golf course.

Ysidro was preceded in death by his parents, sisters Maria Adela and Judy, brother Bobby and stepson Ian Matthew Ball.

He is survived by his wife Ann, brothers Ron and Alex, daughters Amalia Kindel Ranck (Steve) and Amanda Katherine Barron. Services/ Celebration of Ysidro's life are pending.

Sign guestbook at obituaries.reviewjournal.com

IN MEMORIAM

DAVID RUDOLPH DICKENS December 22, 1950-October 8, 2022

My Darling David, you are a Supreme and Beautiful Soul, and I so deeply feel eternally connected to you. Our Love is FOREVER and ALWAYS. Nothing and no one will ever break that CHAIN. GOD will reunite us and we WILL be TOGETHER in the next LIFE. I love you more than life itself. I love you more than anything or anyone in this life. You are everything to me and represent goodness with this world. You made me believe in goodness whenever I have doubts. You are one hell of a man, and I love you so much that my heart feels like it will BURST. Your wife, Angelique. HAPPY 72ND BIRTHDAY TO MY SOULMATE!

► CHALLENGE

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Engelstad, trustee of the Engelstad Foundation, said in a news release.

“Our winners embarked on quite a journey to win and achieve funding,” she said. “We can’t wait to see all they do to take their ideas — and education in our state — to new heights.”

Applications for the challenge were accepted from January through March, and more than 200 were completed, the news release said.

The contest’s final round included high-profile judges such as singer-songwriter Jewel, tennis player Andre Agassi and television host Mike Rowe.

Nguyen’s winning project

Nguyen’s A Platform for the Future concept includes “building a platform for localized job shadowing, training, and mentorship,” according to the news release.

His goal is to have at least 1,000 users within the first year after it’s launched and more than 10 partnering organizations that are regularly contributing.

Nguyen came up with the idea in 2017 after reflecting on what he was hearing from students. Once students graduated from his classes and continued on to college or the workforce, they often struggled to navigate what opportunities existed, he said.

The idea he proposed was initially picking five to 10 companies or organizations in Las Vegas and to “feature jobs in a way that’s understandable for kids,” he said.

A web portal will be a centralized place where students can find information such as requirements for certain jobs and where they can get licenses needed for those positions, Nguyen said.

It will also include videos that feature people who work in each job, as well as contact people, and how to apply.

Nguyen plans to launch a website early next year and will continue to work on a mobile app. He said he plans to use a good portion of the contest funding to hire people for his project’s leadership team.

He said it will take a while to build

out certain aspects of what he wants to do, including creating opportunities for mentorship.

Nguyen, an automation technology teacher and head robotics coach, is in his ninth year of teaching. After graduating from Dartmouth College, he arrived at the school in 2014 as a physics teacher through Teach For America.

“I learned to realize the importance of education,” he said.

It’s not the first time Nguyen has been recognized for his efforts. In 2019, he won a prestigious \$25,000 Milken Educator Award.

Nguyen said many of his students go into the workforce instead of seeking long academic careers.

In career and technical education programs, students are learning about skills and trades — “things that actually create physical value in the world,” he said.

Nguyen said that he previously worked with a Las Vegas-based startup company and that he has been thinking about how to bring the agility of business and technology to a school system where change moves slowly.

Other winners

Another contest winner, Las Vegas-based retired teacher Eleanor Cormier and her Project 300 Early Learning Academy model, will receive \$50,000.

Funding will go toward “an online virtual tutoring program for kindergartners in urban elementary schools of Clark County to strengthen their literacy skills utilizing Common Core State Standards in English language arts,” according to the release.

Cormier wants to serve 100 students by the end of 2023.

Mindful Music Moments will receive \$25,000 to expand into the state by launching a pilot program next year. Its Nevada organizer is Henderson resident Dorothy Blake.

It’s a “combination of mindful, creative prompts and world-class music” that allows students and employees a daily moment to “center and ground” before learning begins, according to the release.

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