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## **KANSAS COUNTY PAYS MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR SETTLEMENT FOR SHOOTING DEATH OF UNARMED MAN**

*Barber County pays \$3.5 Million for Officer-Involved Shooting in 2017, Believed to be Record-Setting Settlement for Kansas*

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Barber County, Kansas officials have reached a **\$3.5 million settlement** agreement in a federal civil rights lawsuit for the 2017 beanbag shooting death of an unarmed man in Sun City. This is believed to be the largest civil settlement ever for an officer-involved shooting death in the state of Kansas.

Today, attorneys representing **Kristina Myers**, the widow of 42-year-old **Steven Myers**, announced the settlement with Barber County and KCAMP (Kansas County Association Multiline Pool), a self-funded insurance pool representing municipalities and counties throughout Kansas. Part of the agreement, which was reached earlier this spring, included a confidentiality clause that expired yesterday.

On October 6, 2017, Barber County Sheriff's officials responded to a disturbance involving Mr. Myers. He attempted to follow officers' commands but was instead shot at close range by **Undersheriff Virgil "Dusty" Brewer**. The Sheriff's Office and the KBI initially blamed Mr. Myers for his own death, but after further investigation, Undersheriff Brewer was charged criminally for Mr. Myers' death. [Please click here](#) for details on the body camera video and audio recordings that were central to this case.

### **Response from Kristina Myers, Steven's Widow**

"There is nothing in this world that could ever replace my husband," said Steven's widow, Kristina Myers. "I'd give anything to have my husband back, for my children to have their father, and for Steven's family to have him once again. But with this settlement, Steven's name will finally be cleared. This horrible chapter of our lives will finally come to a close, and our children can find their new normal."

"As the world saw, the body camera video and audio showed that Steven complied with the officers' orders," she continued. "That should have been enough, but my husband was brutally killed nevertheless. My family is still waiting for action to be taken in regard to the officer who shot my husband. The shooter is still certified as a law enforcement officer in Kansas, despite our repeated requests that Kansas CPOST revoke the shooter's certification."

"Steven was a beloved son, uncle, brother, husband and friend. Most importantly, he was the proud father of our three children. He loved our Red Hills and was proud to call Barber County home. We will forever cherish his memory."

For an extended statement from Kristina Myers, including comments related to the recent events in Minneapolis involving George Floyd, [please click here](#).

### **Attorney Comments**

Attorney Michael Kuckelman of Overland Park, Kansas firm Kuckelman Torline Kirkland led the case with attorney Michael Crabb.

"We realize that law enforcement officials are in a stressful position, and we appreciate the heroic job that so many of them perform every day without recognition," Mr. Kuckelman said. "But we cannot look the other way for the few bad ones. Sheriff Lonnie Small and Undersheriff Brewer are incompetent as law enforcement officers. Mr. Myers' death was absolutely unnecessary, and now the people of Barber County will have to pay the price for this department's recklessness. We again ask for Kansas CPOST to get involved and to revoke their certifications to serve as law enforcement officers in Kansas."

Kuckelman added, "I hope Barber County taxpayers start demanding answers from their elected officials about how the Barber County Sheriff's Department is being run. Lonnie Small's lack of departmental training, lack of oversight, and lack of general concern for the average resident in Barber County have now cost the taxpayers millions of dollars. Most importantly, though, it cost a man his life."

Mr. Kuckelman is demanding the Kansas Commission on Peace Officers' Standards and Training (KS CPOST) strip Undersheriff Brewer of his law enforcement certification.

"Why has KS CPOST not taken any action against Undersheriff Brewer? How is he still a certified law enforcement officer in Kansas, despite the video and now a \$3,500,000 settlement for killing an unarmed man? KS CPOST needs to correct this immediately. It took Minneapolis exactly one day to fire all four officers after killing Mr. Floyd. What's the holdup here? Undersheriff Brewer isn't fit to serve in law enforcement... in Kansas or anywhere else."

Dusty Brewer is currently on bond, facing a criminal trial in Kansas City, Kansas for Mr. Myers' homicide. It has been postponed to September 21, 2020.

### **Continued Legal Troubles**

This is the second wrongful death lawsuit facing Barber County Sheriff Lonnie Small and Undersheriff Dusty Brewer. Mr. Kuckelman and Mr. Crabb recently filed a federal wrongful death lawsuit on behalf of the estate of Olivia Rennaker, who died by hanging while in the Barber County jail in 2018, even though her cell was under constant video and audio surveillance. A copy of that lawsuit may be found [by clicking here](#).

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Please [click here](#) for images of Steven Myers.