

Attorney: Stewart family's \$20 million lawsuit is about 'justice'

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MURFREESBORO — The attorney for the family of a slain Lady Raider basketball player said the \$20 million lawsuit filed against her alleged killer Friday is about justice — not money.

“People make money sometimes off of criminal acts,” said Nashville attorney David Raybin, who is representing the family of MTSU basketball player Tina Stewart. “Her family wants to prevent the defendant in this case from doing so.”

Stewart was killed March 2 at her off-campus apartment by 18-year-old MTSU freshman Shanterrica Madden, according to police. Prosecutors in the criminal case against Madden have alleged the killing was premeditated, while Madden attorney Joe Brandon Jr. has argued the killing was self-defense.

Raybin filed the lawsuit seeking \$10 million in compensatory damages and another \$10 million in punitive damages Friday.

In a brief interview, Brandon said he believes the filing of the lawsuit and its subsequent publication by media outlets before he was even aware of it is about something else.

“It appears that the plaintiffs are attempting to try their case in the media, as opposed to in the courtroom,” Brandon said. “Once we have had an opportunity to review the complaint, we will be more than happy to respond.”

Stewart’s mother, Ida Stewart Jackson, and father, Adrian Lee Jackson, are listed as plaintiffs in the suit against Madden. Raybin said the family decided to file the suit Friday to avoid giving up its right to recover funds from Madden in the future.



Aaron Thompson/DNJ Tina Stewart's father, Adrian Jackson, and mother, Ida Stewart Jackson, watch during a preliminary hearing for Shanterrica Madden on March 24 in Rutherford County General Sessions Court. Stewart's family has filed a \$20 million wrongful death suit against Madden.

“If they don’t file within the first year, the statute of limitations says they can lose their rights,” Raybin said.

The family had no reservations about filing the suit, Raybin added, and they understand that the criminal case in their daughter’s death takes priority.

“They have total faith in the district attorney’s office and the criminal justice system,” Raybin said. “The reason we waited until now to file the lawsuit was that we wanted to be able to enter facts introduced by the district attorneys at the preliminary hearing.”

The lawsuit against Madden outlines that compensatory damages are being sought by the family in connection with Stewart’s funeral and burial costs, along with other “economic” damages.

Punitive damages are being sought in reference to Stewart’s mother and father suffering emotional distress and a loss of “consortium” as a result of their daughter’s death. “Consortium” is a legal term under Tennessee law for a familial relationship.

Damages for Tina Stewart’s own pain and suffering, which she “suffered prior to her death,” are also being sought.

“The family is horrified and they are in shock,” Raybin said. “This is a terrible nightmare for them and I’m pleased to help them whatever way I can.”

— Mark Bell, 615-278-5153