

OBITUARY

Angela C. Wilhite

Angela C. Wilhite, 65, of Owensboro passed away peacefully on Jan. 26, 2026, at Continue CARE Hospital at Baptist Health Deaconess in Madisonville. The Daviess County native was born Jan. 19, 1961, to the late Ivan and Susan Wimsatt Davis. She graduated from Owensboro Catholic High School and was a stay-at-home mom and an extraordinary mother for two children who were her world. Angela was a genuinely kind person and everyone who met her loved her. She was an animal lover, a devout catholic, and a lover of country music. In her youth, she was an artist. In her spare time, she enjoyed saying the rosary, watching EWTN, and spending time with her loved ones.

Those left to cherish her memory include her two daughters, Sarah Johnson (Brian) of Dixon and Emily Wilhite of Owensboro; her siblings, David Davis also of Owensboro and Alicia Burns of Nashville; two



grandchildren, Athena Johnson and Asher Johnson.

The funeral service will be 4 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 1 at Glenn Funeral Home and Crematory officiated by Father Pat Reynolds. Visitation will be Sunday from 1 until 3:30 pm. A private interment will be in Resurrection Cemetery.

The family wishes to extend their sincere thanks to the wonderful nursing staff at Continue CARE of Madisonville as well as Father Pat Reynolds of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church.

Condolences and memories for Angela’s family may be left at [www.glenncares.com](http://www.glenncares.com).

FUNERALS

**Bishop, William**, 82, died Wednesday. Service: 12 p.m. Monday, Feb. 2 at James H. Davis Funeral Home. Burial: follows in Pleasant Grove Cemetery. Visitation: 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Monday at the funeral home.

**Bullock, Larry**, 82, died Tuesday. Service: 2 p.m. Monday at Tucker Funeral Home in Central City. Burial: Rose Hill Cemetery. Visitation: 11 a.m. Monday until time of service at the funeral home.

**Crawford, Pamilla**, 85, died Tuesday, Jan. 20. Service: 4 p.m. Saturday at Haley McGinnis Funeral Home and Crematory. Visitation: 2 to 4 p.m. Saturday at the funeral home.

**Crusenberry, Stan**, 88, died Monday, Jan. 19. Service: 12 p.m. Saturday at Glenn Funeral Home and Crematory. Burial: follows in Christ Chapel at Owensboro Memorial Gardens. Visitation: 9 a.m. until time of service Saturday at the funeral home.

**Embry, Shannon**, 51, died Saturday, Jan. 24. Service: 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 7 at William L. Danks Funeral Home in Beaver Dam. Visitation: 9 a.m. until time of service Saturday at the funeral home.

**Greenwell, Thomas**, 84, died Wednesday, Jan. 21. A Celebration of Life will be held Sunday, Feb. 8, 2026, from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Waverly KC Hall located at 114 North Maple St. Waverly, Kentucky.

**Griggs, Sarah**, 41, died Monday. Service: 12 p.m. Saturday at James H. Davis Funeral Home and Crematory. Burial: follows in Pleasant Grove

Cemetery. Visitation: 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday at the funeral home.

**Hodges, Bradley**, 42, died Saturday, Jan. 24. Service: 2 to 5 p.m. Saturday at Glenn Funeral Home and Crematory.

**Lee, Barry**, 60, died Saturday, Jan. 24. A celebration of life will be held from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at Settle Memorial United Methodist Church Gymnasium, 201 E. 4th St., Owensboro, KY 42301.

**Lindsey, Judy**, 75, died Friday. Service: 1 p.m. Saturday at Hartford Christian Church. Burial: Oakwood Cemetery. Visitation: 9 a.m. until the time of service Saturday at the church.

**Martin, Jennie**, 91, died Saturday. Service: 12 p.m. Saturday at Tucker Memorial Chapel in Sacramento, KY. Visitation: 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. Saturday at the funeral home.

**Siddons, Joseph**, 73, died Wednesday, Jan. 21. Mass will be held 10 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 3 at St. Bernard Catholic Church in Rockport, Indiana. Burial: follows at St. Bernard Catholic Cemetery in Rockport, Indiana. Visitation: 3 to 7 p.m. Tuesday at Boultinghouse Funeral Home in Rockport, IN.

**Uzzle, Paul**, 86, died Saturday, Jan. 24. Service: 11 a.m. Sunday, Feb. 1 at Nelson Pentecostal Church. Burial: Rose Hill Cemetery. Visitation: 5 to 8 p.m. Saturday and 8 a.m. until time of service Sunday at the church.

**Williams, Karen**, 78, died Sunday. Service: 1 p.m. Friday at Muster Funeral Homes, Calhoun Chapel. Visitation: 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. Friday at the funeral home.

Oldham County mom sues Kentucky child welfare officials over records request

BY DEBORAH YETTER KENTUCKYLANTERN.COM

An Oldham County mother has filed a lawsuit against Kentucky child welfare officials, alleging they violated state open records law by failing to provide records related to child deaths and serious injuries from neglect and abuse.

Jennifer Mortenson, who has 12 children, six of whom are adopted, said she is seeking the records to determine whether there are gaps in Kentucky’s system when it comes to protecting children.

While the Cabinet for Health and Family Services has provided thousands of pages of the records, it hasn’t fully complied with her request, has missed deadlines set by state law, provided incomplete files and has heavily redacted the material, according to the lawsuit filed Dec. 23 in Franklin Circuit Court.

“I’m not trying to make things difficult but open records are what they are,” Mortenson, a long-time child advocate, said in an interview. “You’re legally entitled to them.”

A Health and Family Services spokeswoman responded that the cabinet is complying with Mortenson’s request and continues to do so on a “rolling basis” as it reviews case files for release and redacts some information for privacy reasons.

“Following its commitment to transparency, the cabinet has provided extensive records in response to the open records request and has continually informed the requester of its ongoing review of records and the time needed to complete the review,” spokeswoman Beth Fisher said in an email. “At this time the cabinet has provided about 8,800 pages of records with necessary redactions and is reviewing between 12,000 and 14,000 additional records.”

As for potential gaps in child protection, Fisher said the cabinet’s “top priority is the health and safety of the Kentuckians we serve — especially children — and we remain committed to doing that work transparently and in accordance with our state laws.”

Access to some child protection records have been well-established by the courts in recent years.

In 2016, after a seven-year legal battle with the Louisville Courier Journal and the Lexington Herald-Leader, the state conceded that files it keeps of child deaths and near fatal-injuries are public records. The cabinet settled the legal battle by agreeing to pay the newspapers nearly \$700,000 in penalties and legal costs.

The Todd County Standard, in a separate case, also won the right to obtain records related to the 2011 death of a child in that county who was fatally beaten after the cabinet placed her in an adoptive home.



Sarah Ladd/ Kentucky Lantern

A lawsuit against the state seeking records on child deaths and abuse has been assigned to Franklin Circuit Judge Phillip Shepherd, whose previous rulings upheld public access to such records in similar cases brought by Kentucky newspapers.

The records of the case involving Amy Dye, 9, of Todd County, were particularly damaging. It became a symbol of systemic failures after records the state released showed state social service officials had disregarded repeated abuse allegations from teachers at her school.

NO LONGER CONFIDENTIAL

The cabinet for years had argued all such records were confidential but eventually agreed to abide by court rulings that found that cases in which a child dies or nearly dies from suspected abuse or neglect are subject to open records law.

There have been about 200 or more such cases per year in Kentucky over the past several years.

An outside panel that reviews all child deaths or severe injuries from suspected abuse or neglect reported in its most recent annual report that it examined 70 child deaths and 149 near-deaths in the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2023. It reviewed 68 deaths and 134 near deaths of children the previous year.

Mortenson said she wants more details about how the cabinet identifies and investigates such cases.

Mortenson said she and her husband, Matthew, became foster-adoptive parents in 2016. (Such parents provide temporary care for children with the goal of reuniting them with their parents but are prepared to legally adopt.) She also helps operate Hope’s Closet, which provides free children’s clothing and other items for foster, adoptive and kinship families.

She serves on the cabinet’s Trusted Advisors Council, a panel of individuals who have been involved with the foster adoptive system that recommend changes and identify areas of concern.

Mortenson said she first began requesting records

in September 2025 of all child deaths and near-deaths from abuse or neglect for 2024 and the first eight months of 2025 but doesn’t believe the cabinet is fully complying.

Mortenson’s lawsuit has been assigned to Franklin Circuit Judge Phillip Shepherd, whose previous rulings upheld public access to such records in the cases brought by the newspapers starting in 2009.

Mortenson also has filed a complaint with the Inspector General for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services outlining her concerns.

‘PLAN OF SAFE CARE’

Mortenson said she has become increasingly concerned about several areas where she sees gaps in protection for children and hopes to use the information to encourage lawmakers to strengthen laws.

One such area is how state social services staff oversee cases of newborns exposed to substances such as drugs or alcohol including those born with neonatal abstinence syndrome — in withdrawal from drugs, usually opioids, but often more than one substance.

Federal law requires state child welfare workers to create what’s known as a “Plan of Safe Care” for such newborns, meant to ensure the health and safety of the baby and support parents and caregivers.

Yet an outside panel that reviews child abuse deaths and near fatalities in Kentucky last year found in more than a third of the cases it reviewed of infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome, no record of such a plan could be found. The Child Fatality and Near Fatality External Review Panel concluded that was likely an “underestimate” of newborns without such plans.

Even as cases of infants born exposed to substances or in withdrawal have risen steadily in recent years, its report found the

safety plan “is rarely available to most Kentucky families who are in dire need.” Such infants are at greater risk for health problems as well as abuse and neglect, the report said.

The panel noted that last year was the second year in a row it has recommended improving the system to provide such safety plans for infants with neonatal abstinence syndrome, noting that they are at risk of health problems as well as injury and death from abuse and neglect.

“Year after year, the panel has documented that these children are at serious risk of maltreatment,” the report said.

A state health office that tracks such births found a slight decrease in 2024 in the number of infants born with neonatal abstinence syndrome.

In 2024, there were 741 cases of babies with signs and symptoms of the syndrome versus 792 cases reported in 2023, according to the Kentucky Public Health Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome Reporting Registry 2025 annual report.

Among its recommendations: “Every infant, including those prenatally exposed to drugs or alcohol, should leave the hospital with an appropriate plan of safe care.”

But Mortenson said she doesn’t believe that’s happening, based on records she has collected and reviewed so far.

Her complaint to the federal health agency states that she believes safety plans are only documented in “a small percentage of cases” of newborns with neonatal abstinence syndrome. Her complaint said that appears to result from failure of a health provider to diagnose and report the condition to child welfare authorities as well as the failure of Kentucky Child Protective Services (CPS) to investigate and follow up on all such cases brought to its attention.

CASES ‘SCREENED OUT’

Mortenson also said she’s concerned that in many cases of child abuse and neglect, perpetrators are not prosecuted. She’s also concerned that Child Protective Services “screens out” too many reports of suspected abuse or neglect as not meriting an investigation, a concern also highlighted by the outside panel in its most recent report.

“Screening out of CPS referrals has been a concern addressed by the panel for many years and continues to be the most frequently identified area of concern,” its report said.

POLICE REPORTS

The following list was compiled from reports to area law enforcement agencies:

Owensboro Police Department

• Matthew N. Rhoads, 44, of the 3600 block of Placid Place East was

charged Wednesday with driving under the influence.

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