

Their Memory Will Never Be Washed Away: Remembering Victims of June 14 Flood

WHEELING – Their names trickled in over the course of 12 days.

Sandra Parsons; Michael Bokanovich; Connie and Michael Veronis; Lisa McMasters; Jesse Pearson; Kyleigh and Parker Shotton; Travis Creighton.

When flash flooding struck the Valley Grove and Triadelphia communities the evening of June 14, it carried with it a force that changed everything. Roads crumbled and vanished; dozens of homes were destroyed; cars swept away.

In the aftermath, our greater Ohio Valley community was left to count not only what was lost – homes, belongings – but, most importantly, who.

Nine lives, each with stories still unfolding, were taken far too soon. They were parents, children, neighbors, and friends. Some were known for their laughter, others for their quiet strength. One was getting ready to get his learner's permit to drive.

All were deeply loved. All are deeply missed.

Since June 14, as the victims have been found and identified, we've learned little pieces of them and their lives. Today, we

honor each of them—offering a glimpse into the lives they lived, the joy they shared, and the space they leave behind.

These are their names.

These are their stories.

This is our promise to never forget.

Kyleigh and Parker Shotton

Kyleigh Renay Shotton, 26, and her 3-year-old daughter, Parker Grace Shotton, were among the victims of the June 14 flooding. Just weeks before, Kyleigh had fulfilled a lifelong dream — marrying the love of her life, Jeremy Shotton.

Now, Jeremy and their infant son, Luke, are left to carry forward their legacy.

Kyleigh was a woman known for her vibrant spirit, creativity, and love of the outdoors. She had a passion for crafting, always finding joy in making something beautiful with her own hands. She was also adventurous at heart — traveling the country with Jeremy, embracing each new place they landed as an opportunity for discovery. Together, they lived a life marked by movement and meaning, building memories across states from Texas to South Dakota to New Hampshire.

Kyleigh's achievements were many, but her heart remained rooted in simple joys — family, farm life, and her love for animals. She was crowned West Virginia Dairy Maid two years in a row, a reflection of both her poise and her strong connection to her rural roots. She worked with horses at the Oglebay Stables, where she also took Parker for pony rides — moments that became treasured rituals for the two.

Parker Grace, affectionately called “the smartest 3-year-old” by family, mirrored her mother’s zest for life. Bright, curious, and fearless, Parker loved animals — especially her two dogs that sometimes knocked her down but never failed to bring her joy.

Her days were spent alongside her little brother Luke, whom she adored and taught everything she knew, even at her young age.

In a deeply emotional tribute shared online, Jeremy Shotton offered a window into their love story that began seven years earlier. After meeting Kyleigh and falling quickly in love, he was relocated for work to Texas. Despite knowing each other for just a short time, Kyleigh didn’t hesitate to take a leap of faith and join him. That decision, Jeremy wrote, revealed the strength and heart that defined her.

“She stuck with me through thick and thin,” he said. “She made me the man I am today.” Together, they worked their way across the country. It was in South Dakota that they learned they were expecting Parker. Though initially scared, they embraced the journey of parenthood. Parker was born as “a spitting image of Kyleigh,” Jeremy recalled — his wife’s little twin, and the “greatest gift God had ever given us.”

When Luke came along, Kyleigh joked with the kids, “It must be nice to have your daddy’s last name.” Jeremy soon proposed. They married on May 31 of this year — just four weeks ago today — and celebrated the family life Kyleigh had always dreamed of.

Some of Jeremy’s favorite memories of Parker came from their time at a campground in Oklahoma, where their site backed up to a cow pasture and horse track. Parker would watch animals for hours, her curiosity unshaken. At home, her weekly rides at Oglebay became sacred time, always asking for her favorite horse,

Comet, and insisting on bringing treats — despite being nibbled more than once.

Jeremy ended his tribute with a promise to keep Kyleigh's and Parker's memories alive for Luke. "I will raise Luke exactly how I know you'd want him raised. I'll point to y'all in the pictures and tell him exactly who his favorite people were. ... This isn't goodbye. It's until we meet again."

Travis Creighton

Brian Creighton loves to talk about his late son Travis, whom he described as "a great human being." Talking about Travis helps him to remember just why his son was so wonderful.

Travis, 19, had been one English credit short of his high school diploma at Wheeling Park High School, and at his father's urging he enrolled at West Virginia Northern Community College to get that final credit. It took him just three weeks.

Travis had been working with his father at Team Sledd Convenience Distributor in Elm Grove. He "loved" the job.

On the night of June 14, Travis was in the flood water with his mother Donna just prior to being swept away by the strong current. Donna was able to make it to safety. It has been reported that the last thing he said to his mother as they were separated was to make it to safety.

"I'm just trying to stay strong for Donna," Brian said. "I have been trying to take the lead on this because being a social person has never been her strong suit, and it kind of is mine.

"Travis was definitely the greatest human being I've ever known."

He called all three of his children “treasures.” Travis has two older siblings – Shelby and Ryan.

Brian said Travis had a smile that lit up the room whenever he entered.

He explained that within their household dynamic, Travis was just as much a best friend to his parents as he was a son.

“He wasn’t too cool to hang out with us, and it meant a lot,” Brian added.

They shared a lot of the same interests. They liked the same music and watching horror movies together. His favorite were movies from the Friday the 13th series.

Travis also achieved Eagle Scout designation after completing a bicycle bridge along the hiking trail at Grand Vue Park.

“If you needed help, he would drop whatever he needed to do to help. He didn’t care what it was,” Brian said. “Helped my mother-in-law cut her grass. He took away the grass cutting from me so I was retired.”

Brian said he and Travis had plans prior to his passing. First, he had planned to take him to get his learner’s permit for driving.

He also planned to surprise him with concert tickets to see the band Fear in Pittsburgh.

“I drove him over half the country for concerts and horror movie conventions,” Brian said.

Michael and Connie Veronis

Michael and Connie Veronis “lived their lives full of love, generosity and resilience. They will be deeply missed but forever cherished in our hearts,” loved ones noted.

Although they resided in Moundsville, the couple had many friends and relatives in the area. Officials said they were traveling in their truck when the vehicle got swept into the rising flood water in the Triadelphia area the evening of June 14.

Michael, 74, was announced as one of the first victims recovered from the flood shortly after the disaster. Connie, 71, had been listed among the missing until her body was recovered two days later.

Both Michael and Connie were cherished members of their community, loved ones noted. Their lives were a testament to the values of hard work, dedication and unwavering love for family and faith.

Michael Veronis spent his working career underground as a coal miner, playing an integral role in the life and economy of the region. His commitment to his profession and his community was evident in his long-standing membership with the United Mine Workers Local 1473 and the Knights of Columbus Council No. 1907 in Moundsville.

An avid outdoorsman, Michael found solace in the quiet moments of hunting and fishing, while also carrying a deep passion for cheering on the West Virginia University Mountaineers.

Connie Veronis devoted her professional talents to serving as a dental hygienist, where her warmth and care became a cornerstone of comfort for many patients. Her vibrant spirit thrived in her roles within the Ladies League of Marshall County

and the Gabriel Project, reflecting her deep-rooted desire to give back to those around her. Whether shopping or traveling, Connie's joy was in sharing experiences with loved ones, her family said.

Together, the Veronises shared an enduring devotion to their family. They were steadfast supporters of their grandson, Joseph Michael Dille, never missing any of his sporting events or activities. He was both the light and pride of their lives, a testament to the love and admiration they held for their family.

As devout members of St. Francis Xavier Catholic Church in Moundsville, Mike and Connie's faith was the guiding force in their lives – a community of support and spiritual solace that they nurtured and fortified throughout the years.

They leave behind their loving daughters, Beth Veronis and Jill (Scott) Dille, along with a cherished grandson, Joseph Michael Dille. Michael is survived by his siblings, Mary (Joe) Lucas and Christina Williamson, while Connie's memory remains in the heart of her sister-in-law, Becky Hulings. Their legacy continues through numerous nieces, nephews, and friends who were privileged to share in the beauty of their lives.

Michael Bokanovich

During his career, Michael Bokanovich worked as a field engineer with Northern Telecom and enjoyed tinkering with a variety of electronics around the house after his retirement.

Michael, 73, resided in Triadelphia. Shortly after the deadly June 14 flash flooding, the Ohio County Sheriff's Department and local emergency officials announced that Bokanovich was among those that had died in the flash flood. He was among the first six victims who were recovered from the aftermath the following day. Three more victims would eventually be recovered.

Born Oct. 9, 1951 to the late Charles and Anna (Wucetic) Bokanovich, he was Catholic by faith and was a devoted member of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church. Michael was a graduate of West Liberty University.

In his retirement, Bokanovich would often pass time reading a good book or the newspaper with the company of the beloved neighborhood cat, Khloe, his loved ones noted. He enjoyed watching WWE, cheering on the Pittsburgh Steelers and dining out with his loving brother and best friend, Frank.

He leaves his brother and a host of cousins to cherish his memory and to carry on his legacy. Friends and family were invited to gather to celebrate his life this past Monday in Elm Grove.

Lisa Marie McMasters

Javier Datiz Jr. said his mother, Lisa Marie McMasters, tried to escape from her flooded Triadelphia home by floating on a garbage can with her dog Tucker.

“When the water started coming into the house, I think she got scared and tried to get out. She couldn’t swim ... and once she got out, the water was moving pretty fast, and I think it just swept her up and took her,” Datiz said.

He said a neighbor tried to rescue his mother, but was unable to get to her.

The 58-year-old woman, who lived in Triadelphia, was one of eight people who died in flash flooding in Ohio County on June 14. McMasters had lived in the Triadelphia area for about 10 years and worked at an area fast food restaurant.

Her son described her as “very strong-willed.”

"She was just generally a nice person," Datiz said.

McMasters' daughter, Shauna McMasters, shared similar sentiments about her mother.

"She was very outgoing," Shauna said. "She knew a lot of people. She was a stubborn person, but everybody always had a good time with her. She would always make people laugh."

The siblings said a neighbor found McMasters' dog Tucker, and her boyfriend took the dog in.

Shauna McMasters, who now lives in South Carolina, said they were able to track their mother's boyfriend down and pick up the dog.

Tucker "just lays around because that was his mom," she said.

Datiz said he's still coming to terms with his mother's sudden death.

"I'm kind of numb from everything, and how it happened," he said. "For something to be so traumatic and to try to understand how she felt in those last moments and what went through her mind, that's a lot to hold in. I think that's what bothers me the most."

Sandra K. Parsons

Sandra K. Parsons, 83, of Triadelphia, was reported missing just after flooding occurred on June 14 in Ohio County.

She was found 10 days later in the Ohio River in Wetzel County near Clarington, Ohio, and was later identified as the ninth and final fatality resulting from the flooding.

Ohio County Sheriff Nelson Croft noted he had been in contact with Parsons' children since the flooding.

"They were pretty resolved as to what the outcome was going to be. They just needed closure at that time, and they are thankful they have that closure," Croft said.

He added the family has expressed gratitude toward the first responders, both those serving locally and those coming in from out of the region.

"They just want to thank everyone, and the family knows that you are grieving with them," Croft continued. "They know that we will all recover with them."

Jesse Pearson

Jesse Pearson was a Pennsylvania native who had migrated to the Ohio Valley for work. Officials said Pearson was a pipeline worker who had been renting a residence in Triadelphia.

Pearson, 43, was not originally among those reported as missing immediately after the flood struck the area on June 14. However, while crews continued to search for one remaining victim who had been reported missing, they discovered Pearson's body along the Ohio River south of downtown Wheeling.

Officials said Pearson died in the flood, and his family in Pennsylvania actually contacted local authorities shortly after he was recovered to report that they had been unable to get in touch with him.

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While some of the victims' stories are more complete, they all belong to something bigger, to something more important. Let us

never forget these nine souls. Let us honor their memory by continuing to work together not only to rebuild these communities, but to show the love and respect each of us in the Ohio Valley has for one another. Be there for your loved ones, your friends, your neighbors. Life can change in an instant.



MICHAEL BOKANOVICH



TRAVIS CREIGHTON



LISA McMASTERS



SANDRA PARSONS



KYLEIGH & PARKER SHOTTON



MICHAEL & CONNIE VERONIS

From a social media account on Facebook:

TRIADELPHIA, WV — June 20, 2025 — The heartbreak deepens in Ohio County as local authorities confirmed this morning the identity of the eighth victim of the catastrophic flooding that has devastated communities across the region. Jesse Pearson, a beloved 42-year-old resident of Triadelphia, was officially identified as one of the lives lost in the disaster that unfolded earlier this week. His tragic passing has sent a wave of grief throughout the area as friends, family, and neighbors struggle to come to terms with the enormity of the loss.

