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## Milwaukee County

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# Search for cause of collapse will take time, sheriff says

## Teen killed on his way to Summerfest

By Ryan Haggerty, Steve Schultze and Crocker Stephenson of the Journal Sentinel June 25, 2010

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Gary Porter

Milwaukee County Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. speaks Friday at O'Donnell Park about the concrete slab that fell from the parking structure below the park on Thursday. County Executive Scott Walker (left) and District Attorney John Chisholm (second from right) also attended the news conference.

Eric Wosinski and Jared Kellner, best friends since kindergarten, were looking forward to attending Summerfest's opening night when they walked out of a downtown parking garage.

The boys, both 15, were a few steps behind Eric's parents Thursday afternoon when a 13 1/2-ton concrete slab fell at least seven feet from the garage's facade, killing Jared and injuring Eric and his mother, Amy Wosinski.

While the boys' families grieved Friday, officials said their desire for an explanation of the fatal collapse would not cause them to rush their investigation.

"Like many of you, I want to know why this happened," Sheriff David A. Clarke Jr. said during a news conference near the garage. "The answer to that, however, is going to take some time."

Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker said the garage underneath O'Donnell Park would remain closed until engineers determine it is safe. Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm said his office is helping with the investigation.

Jared, a Greenfield resident, had grown up in East Troy with Eric, said Eric's grandmother, Karen Maranowicz.

Jared had just completed his freshman year at Whitnall High School, where he played the trumpet and the marimba, said band director Griffin James.

"He was very funny and very clever," James said. "He was a really stellar music student."

He also had a sister who just completed fourth grade, James said.

Austin Muszynski, 15, grew up with Jared on a cul de sac in East Troy. He and his mother, Vickie Muszynski, were planning on running into Jared at Summerfest on Thursday evening.

"He loved concerts," Austin said. "He doesn't miss concerts."

"Or Summerfest," Vickie Muszynski said.

Austin said Jared, who returned to East Troy on almost a weekly basis, got along with everyone.

"He was always himself, no matter what people said. He had tolerance for everyone. Everyone loved him," Austin said.

Vickie Muszynski found a couple of pictures of Jared and placed them on the kitchen table. Jared was a small boy in them. In one photo, he and all the kids around him are covered with mud.

"Remember that?" she asked Austin.

Austin nodded.

Muszynski had spoken with Dawn Kellner, Jared's mother, earlier in the

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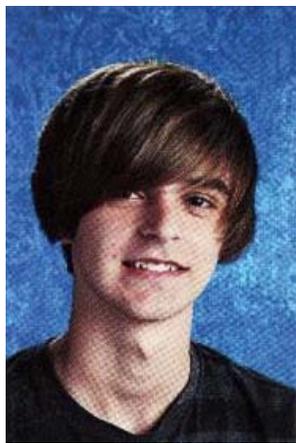
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Jared Kellner

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[Downtown concrete collapse](#)

day and said she was grief-stricken.

"There is nothing you can do," she said. "There is nothing you can say to make things better."

While the news of Jared's death spread through East Troy on Thursday night, James broke the news to many of Jared's Whitnall classmates Friday morning at a camp for members of the marching band. The band members plan to wear buttons with his initials and picture on them when they march in parades this weekend and over the Fourth of July.

Maranowicz said she was in South Dakota when she learned of the incident Thursday.

"I really don't know what happened," she said through tears Friday while driving to Froedtert Hospital in Wauwatosa to visit her daughter, Amy Wosinski. "We got the call (Thursday) and we've been driving all night."

Wosinski, 36, of East Troy was in satisfactory condition at Froedtert on Friday, and Eric had been released from Children's Hospital of Wisconsin, according to a news release from Froedtert.

Eric's father, Steven Wosinski, was not injured by the falling concrete.

The 30-foot slab fell without warning from the facing of the garage above the exit leading to Lincoln Memorial Drive, directly across from the Milwaukee Art Museum.

Amy Wosinski released a statement Friday morning, thanking people who rushed to assist.

"I would like to thank the kind people who stopped and tried to help us, those who held my hand and gave me support while waiting for emergency crews to arrive," she said. "It helped get me through the very difficult situation."

Thursday's concrete collapse is the second tragedy to strike the Wosinski family in the past year.

Eric's 17-year-old brother, Steven, was one of three East Troy High School students [killed in a crash](#) near Mukwonago in December.

Jared's family also released a statement Friday that said, in part: "Even as a teenager, he wasn't afraid to hug his grandparents in public." He also was confident and did not care what other people thought of him, the statement says.

"It was that self-acceptance that made him understanding, appreciative and tolerant of the uniqueness of others," the statement says. "Jared made everyone feel like they were his best friend."

## Investigation continues

Investigators of Thursday's collapse are focusing on design and installation of the ramp's 27,000-pound precast concrete slabs, county Public Works Director Jack Takerian said Friday.

If properly installed, the top of each panel should connect to the ramp structure with four steel rods, he said. The bottoms of the slabs are designed to be bolted to the ramp structure.

Takerian said the reason the piece broke off the ramp remained under investigation. He said he expected a preliminary conclusion by late next week.

"If it's installed the way it's designed, the structure would have to lift up four to five inches in order for it to fall the way it did," Takerian said. He declined to say whether the rods were properly installed on the panel that fell off the building.

Walker said the county's consulting engineers were checking to see if the concrete panels were installed correctly.

"The question is whether the slabs matched the original (design) plan or not," Walker said. He said multiple factors may have played into the failure of the ramp panel.

Takerian cast doubt on two theories on the failed panel. He said it was "very unlikely someone would shear it off" by hitting the ramp wall with a vehicle. He also said the Canadian earthquake that was felt in Milwaukee on Wednesday was a doubtful cause of the panel failure.

However, the 5.0-magnitude earthquake "could well have triggered the failure" of the concrete panel even though the epicenter was nearly 700 miles northeast of Milwaukee, near the Quebec-Ontario border, said Ali M. Memari, an architectural engineering professor at Penn State University who has extensively researched the effects of seismic activity on concrete cladding and other elements of buildings.

Because the panel that fell was so huge, it is possible there was enough force to wrench loose the fasteners that held the slab to the parking garage, Memari said. The building would be particularly vulnerable if the fasteners had corroded, Memari said.

He stressed that he was only speculating.

"One thing that's for sure is these types of failures are very rare," Memari said. "They can happen in

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extreme conditions like earthquakes when the buildings move back and forth and are shaken. . . . But in Milwaukee just a panel sitting by itself and falling is quite rare and very, very surprising."

Despite their massive weight, the panels are decorative and don't serve any structural function, said Kenneth Loeffel, a retired county engineer who worked on the O'Donnell project. Loeffel said there were no problems that came up during the installation of the panels.

The firm that designed, cast and installed the panels was Advanced Cast Stone of Random Lake. Company officials could not be reached for comment. Advanced was one of 23 contractors on the nearly \$30 million project, which was completed in the early 1990s.

Walker said Friday the county would pursue legal action against any contractor found to have done shoddy work on the project that led to the collapsed panel.

## Problems corrected

Walker also released a report showing that nearly all flaws identified by inspectors in the O'Donnell Park parking ramp in 2009 had been corrected. An earlier report listed \$600,000 of repairs the ramp needed.

All items listed as critical, potentially critical or necessary - the three highest priority problem categories - have been repaired, Walker said in an interview. Those include repairing the ramp's sprinkler system, patching cracks in the ramp's superstructure and repairing expansion joints, according to an updated report done Friday by county Parks Director Sue Black.

None of those problems related to the concrete facade slabs that decorate the sides of the ramp, Walker said.

The information was included in a 2009 report prepared for the county by consultant Vanderweil Facility Advisors, based in Boston.

The last complete assessment of the garage was conducted in 2004, Takerian said.

Walker has said that he had seen no evidence that deferred maintenance played any role in the incident, and he criticized County Board Chairman Lee Holloway for calling for a safety review of all county buildings.

Holloway on Friday ordered a county audit of all county structures, focusing on safety hazards.

Mark Neumann, who is running against Walker for the Republican Party's gubernatorial nomination, issued a statement Friday that was critical of the maintenance of several county structures.

"It is clear that along with this latest tragedy, the county courthouse, the Zoo Interchange, and the Hoan Bridge, a number of structures in Milwaukee County are in various stages of disrepair," Neumann said. "A full investigation and safety review is absolutely warranted, particularly for structures and facilities that have already been flagged for critical problems."

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## Parking change

Roundy's Supermarkets Inc. has told employees who use the O'Donnell Park parking structure to instead use a parking structure at 875 E. Wisconsin Ave., where the company has its headquarters, Roundy's spokeswoman Vivian King said. Other businesses that use the lot are being asked to make other arrangements with nearby lots.

*Gina Barton, Rick Romell and Sharif Durhams of the Journal Sentinel staff contributed to this report.*



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