

Horrific Fire Takes Life Of A Community College Leader and Young Family

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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FERGUSON, MO. - A beloved Lewis and Clark Community College Head of the Early Child Development and Education programs - Bernadine “Birdie” Pruessner - has been identified as one of the victims in the tragic fire in Ferguson, MO., early Monday morning, Feb. 19, 2024, with her twins, 9, a 6-year-old and 2-year-old. The fire occurred in the 500 block of North Clay Avenue in Ferguson, MO.

The emergency report about the Ferguson fire came in at 4:30 a.m. to authorities on Monday.

Lewis and Clark Community College President Dr. Ken Trzaska provided the following statement about the death of the 38-year-old Bernadine and her family:

"Birdie was a dear colleague and friend to all. She cared so deeply about her students and about helping others. She brought an energy and illuminated such a bright light of positivity and kindness to our campus community.

“We consider ourselves family at LC and we are all devastated and numbed by this tragedy. We will always carry Birdie's legacy and memory forward, and we can never forget the impact that she had on her students and community. We all only hope that her family may find courage and strength during this unfathomable time.”

St. Louis County Police Department Bureau of Crimes Against Persons detectives, St. Louis Regional Bomb and Arson detectives, and Crime Scene Unit detectives are investigating the fatal house fire in the 500 block of North Clay Avenue in the City of Ferguson.

The St. Louis County Police Department confirmed the five deceased individuals consist of one adult female and four children.

[See related story link.](#)