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SPORTS, 1B

The Gadsden Times

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GADSDEN CITY COUNCIL DISTRICT 5

Candidates withdraw after death of Wilson



Jason Wilson, who represented District 5 on the Gadsden City Council, died Aug. 19. PROVIDED BY CITY OF GADSDEN

Wife of late Back Forty Beer Co. founder says she will serve if he is reelected

The Gadsden Times
USA TODAY NETWORK

Gadsden City Councilman Jason Wilson, who represented District 5 and founded the Back Forty Beer Co., has died, city officials announced Aug. 20.

City Council President Kent Back said the 46-year-old Wilson died Aug. 19. Wilson served on the council for eight years and was known for his dedication to the city and its residents.

"Jason loved this city, and it has been an honor to sit beside him on the Council for the past eight years," Back said in a statement. "He was dedicated to making Gadsden better and improving the lives of others."

Back said Wilson remained focused on helping others until the end of his life, including through his decision to be an organ donor.

Wilson's death comes less than two weeks before municipal elections. Back said Wilson remains eligible under Alabama law to be elected to another term. If he is reelected, Wilson's wife, Jessica, has indicated she would be willing to serve if appointed by the council, according to the city.

Following news of Wilson's death,

"Councilman Wilson was a dedicated servant of the people who always had big ideas and could see the possibilities for the city he loved so much."

Craig Ford
Gadsden mayor

District 5 candidates Curtis Fail and Joey Nichols announced on Facebook that they are withdrawing from the race. Both cited respect for Wilson and his family.

Linda Riggins Aaron remains on the ballot for District 5.

Mayor Craig Ford called Wilson's death "a huge loss" for the city.

"Councilman Wilson was a dedicated servant of the people who always had big ideas and could see the possibilities for the city he loved so much," Ford said. "His passion for Gadsden and his commitment to its people will not be forgotten."

City officials offered condolences to

Wilson's family and said he leaves behind a legacy of public service and community involvement.

According to the city of Gadsden's website, Wilson was a Gadsden native and a fifth-generation Alabamian. He and his wife lived in the historic residential district of Gadsden, and they spent their free time restoring their 114-year-old Greek Revival-style home.

After earning a degree in logistics and supply chain management from the Auburn University College of Business in 2005, Wilson spent seven years as a logistics professional for Georgia Pacific.

In 2009, Wilson founded Back Forty Beer Co. and began renovation of a 27,000 square-foot facility in historic downtown Gadsden. Over 10 years, the facility has been through three major expansions, representing over \$15 million in economic impact for the City of Gadsden.

He left the company in 2021, after watching Back Forty Beer Co. become one of the South's premier craft breweries and Alabama's largest manufacturer of alcohol.

Funeral arrangements were not immediately announced.

Jury awards \$9.25M in Kai Spears' defamation verdict

Jennifer Lindahl
Tuscaloosa News
USA TODAY NETWORK

An Alabama jury has awarded former Alabama basketball player Kai Spears \$9.25 million after finding The New York Times defamed him by incorrectly linking him to the 2023 killing of Jamea Harris in Tuscaloosa.

The eight-person federal jury reached its verdict Thursday following a nine-day trial.

Spears sued the Times in 2023 after the newspaper reported that he was a passenger in a vehicle involved in the shooting.

The report was wrong. The passenger was an Alabama basketball team member, not Spears.

The Times later corrected the story and acknowledged the error.

Why Kai Spears sued The New York Times

Spears was a walk-on for Alabama during the 2022-23 season when Harris was killed in the early morning hours of Jan. 15, 2023.

The Times reported that Spears had been in the passenger seat of a vehicle connected to the shooting, citing an anonymous source familiar with the investigation.

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Alabama guard Kai Spears takes a three late in the game on Nov 6, 2023, at Coleman Coliseum in Tuscaloosa. Spears won a \$9.25M lawsuit against The New York Times, claiming defamation by incorrectly linking him to the 2023 killing of Jamea Harris.

GARY COSBY JR./USA TODAY NETWORK

When and how to watch the August lunar eclipse in Alabama

Jennifer Lindahl
Montgomery Advertiser
USA TODAY NETWORK

August's full moon comes with an added celestial show this year: a deep partial lunar eclipse will darken much of the Moon on the night of Aug. 27 and into the early hours of Aug. 28.

And yes, Alabama will be in a position to see the lunar eclipse — if clouds don't get in the way.

When is the August 2026 full moon?

The August full moon, known as the Sturgeon Moon, reaches full phase early Friday, Aug. 28. The eclipse occurs at nearly the same time, making for an especially notable full moon.

At maximum eclipse, about 93% of the Moon's diameter will be inside Earth's dark central shadow, according to NASA. The eclipsed portion can take

on a rusty or coppery appearance. NASA says the partial lunar eclipse will be visible across much of the Americas, including the United States.

Why is it called the Sturgeon Moon?

August's full moon is traditionally known as the Sturgeon Moon, a name tied to the time of year when large sturgeon were once commonly caught in the

Great Lakes and other North American waterways.

The name comes from Indigenous and colonial-era traditions for naming full moons based on seasonal changes and natural events.

Today, "Sturgeon Moon" remains a popular name for August's full moon, even though the timing of sturgeon fishing varies by location.

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