

The Daily Progress

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WHERE YOUR STORY LIVES

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JUSTIN FAIRFAX | 1979-2026

ISOLATED, DRINKING & DISENGAGED



JOE MAHONEY, TIMES-DISPATCH

Virginia Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax meets with reporters on Saturday, Feb. 2, 2019, in Richmond.

Court records detail former lieutenant governor's 'profound retreat' before murder-suicide

MICHAEL MARTZ
Richmond Times-Dispatch

Former Virginia Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax never recovered from the political scandal that brought down his quest to become governor, a Fairfax County judge concluded last month.

After leaving office at the beginning of 2022, blocked by accusations of sexual assault and a rebuke by voters, Fairfax withdrew not only from public life, but from the life of his family, Fairfax Circuit Court Judge Timothy McEvoy wrote in a March 30 child custody order that reads like a Greek tragedy.

The former lieutenant governor, a charismatic lawyer and politician, isolated himself from his wife and two teenage

children. He began drinking heavily and stopped paying the mortgage or other bills. He "cloistered himself" in the law office he kept in their home. When he left home, he often appeared with his head hooded and sat alone with his cellphone in the opposing team's stands at his children's sporting events.

Four years ago, he bought a gun with money intended for his children's horseback riding lessons and then disappeared without a word. His brother and wife's stepfather found him in the woods of a public park, insisting that he needed the gun for protection and carried it with him so the children wouldn't find it. The standoff ended when his brother arranged for a mental health professional to talk to

him in a parking lot at Tyson's Corner Mall at 1 a.m.

"His profound retreat from domestic life cannot be understated," McEvoy said in the 18-page opinion that awarded custody of the couple's son and daughter to their mother, while ensuring an opportunity for their father to remain involved in their lives, if he would make the effort.

Fairfax finally reached the end of his long fall early on Thursday, when Fairfax police say he killed his wife, Cerina, a local dentist and attentive mother, and then turned the same gun on himself.

"Everybody's shocked," Fairfax County Police Chief Kevin Davis told reporters

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BUSINESS

Closed, closed, closing

Big changes coming to west end of Charlottesville Downtown Mall

DAILY PROGRESS STAFF

Three business closures — two anticipated and one abrupt — are shaking up the west end of Charlottesville's Downtown Mall.

The Common House social club at 206 W. Market St. announced this past Wednesday that it would close for good the following day. That sudden announcement has thrown off plans for brides and grooms that had reserved the venue for their upcoming nuptials but also next week's Tom Tom Festival, which had booked the club for its

centerpiece dance party, Prom Prom.

Common House's announcement came the day after the Livery Stable dive bar at 120 Old Preston Ave. announced its last day would be April 26 and a matter of weeks after Brown's Lock and Safe at 210 W. Market St. packed up its store and closed for good.

Both Brown's and the Livery Stable's closures were anticipated.

Employees at Brown's, which opened in 1950 under the ownership of Stewart Brown Jr., told The Daily Progress that business had been winding down. Brick-and-mortar locksmiths have been closing across the country as their customer base has turned to mobile services, do-it-yourself options and digital security.

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CAL CARY, THE DAILY PROGRESS

What remains of the Brown's Lock and Safe sits in a dumpster outside the shuttered business in downtown Charlottesville, Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2026.