

## STATEMENT OF ROBERT W. REMBERT ON BEHALF OF THE FAMILY OF JO ELLEN SAVAGE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PULLMAN --Yesterday we were provided with the 1993 engineering report of Atwood-Hinzman, Inc., Consulting Engineers, which was commissioned by the owners of the River Park Square parking garage following "the complete failure" of a spandrel (guardrail) after an occurrence similar to the one that killed Jo Ellen Savage. The report's purpose "was to determine if the guardrails are safe with respect to containing vehicles within the parking structure after impacting a panel."

The report found "the panels are not resisting the required lateral loading of 6000 [pounds] although the engineering analysis indicates that they should." It noted that "several panels cracked in the past when they were struck in a similar way. ***Based on this information, it appears that a problem exists.***"

The Atwood firm concluded there were only two logical ways for the garage owners to resolve the conflict between the panels apparent code compliance and their failure, namely, perform real-world impact tests to determine under what circumstances the panels fail, or "***assume that the panel[s] will fail and add steel cable to stop vehicles before they impact the panels.***"

Had the garage owners acted on the engineers' recommendation within the last 13 years, Jo Ellen Savage would be alive today.

In response to the release of the Atwood report, the Cowles' spokesperson, Jennifer West, is quoted today as saying that the owners have performed "a great deal of maintenance, sealing and caulking" and other kinds of tests on the walls that shows that the barriers are safe.

Ms. West's remark is disingenuous and contradicted by the engineering reports. The owners have had the Atwood report for over a decade, failed to act on it, and withheld it until compelled to produce it by public demand. They have also had since 1996 the report issued by Walker Parking Consultants/Engineers, Inc., which specifically recommended repairing all vehicle barriers which exhibited cracking and/or concrete deterioration in the vicinity of their connection to the parking deck.

**The barrier which failed Jo Ellen Savage was marked for repair or replacement more than ten years ago but no action was taken.**

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The unsafe condition of the garage was again documented in 2003, when N.G. Jacobson & Associates, Inc., concluded after an extensive inspection of the facility that the original portion (constructed in 1974) of the River Park Square parking garage is in poor condition. This is the same area of the garage in which Jo Ellen Savage died.

Jacobson recommended the:

***Implementation of a well planned, comprehensive major maintenance program that addresses this structure's existing conditions, as well as prioritizes repairing, restoring and protecting this structure[,] should be implemented as soon as possible. Otherwise, left unmaintained and unprotected, this garage will continue to deteriorate at an ever expanding rate and will at some time in the near future reach a damage level or threshold where repair and restoration may no longer be the most economical solution.***

The owners' repeated assertion that "the garage continues to be safe", published again this morning in the Spokesman-Review, is contradicted by 13 years of engineering evaluations and spandrel failures. Jo Ellen Savage's death tragically demonstrates that the garage is not safe.

The garage owners' continued refusal to take responsible action to protect users and the public from danger is beyond comprehension.