

Family of Late College Student Achieves Legal Milestone in Case Involving UCSD Rowing Coach's Alleged Misconduct

Parents Overcome UCSD Rowing Coach Geoff Bond's Defamation and Emotional Distress Claims Related to Public Statements About Their Son's Story

SAN DIEGO, CA, UNITED STATES, January 8, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Brenda and Brian Lilly, Sr., have successfully defended against a defamation lawsuit filed by former UC San Diego (UCSD) [rowing](#) coach Geoff Bond. A California appellate court ruled in favor of the Lillys, dismissing Bond's claims and awarding them reasonable fees and costs incurred during their defense.

The lawsuit arose from public statements made by the Lillys after filing a federal case against Bond and UCSD. In their federal case, they alleged that the coach's behavior created an environment they believe contributed to the death of their son, Brian Lilly, Jr., a UCSD student-athlete in 2021. The appellate court upheld the dismissal of Bond's claims and affirmed the Lillys' right to address matters of public concern.

Federal Case Continues Against UCSD and Bond

The Lillys are pursuing a federal case in which they allege a pattern of [bullying](#) and psychological abuse by former UCSD rowing coach Geoff Bond. They assert that Bond's actions, combined with UCSD's lack of intervention, contributed to their son's death.

Court documents detail allegations against Bond, including claims of shaming [athletes](#), using sexually inappropriate language, and disregarding complaints from students. The documents also state that UCSD hired Bond despite his alleged conduct and failed to address concerns raised by Brian Jr. and others.



Photo of Brian Lilly, Jr. (provided by Lilly Family)

“The family is shining a spotlight on the pressure and abuse young athletes often endure,” said Valerie Garcia Hong of Garcia Hong Law. “This isn’t just about their son—it’s about holding people accountable and changing a broken system.”

The federal case involves claims of retaliation under Title IX and wrongful death, which have been permitted to move forward. The court acknowledged the family's allegations that UCSD officials did not act on warnings about Bond’s behavior.

The Lillys viewed Bond’s defamation lawsuit as an effort to suppress their public comments. The appellate court determined that their statements were protected speech, highlighting the significance of public accountability.



Brian Lilly, Jr. during his Freshman Year at UCSD (photo provided by Lilly Family)

“Parents speaking out for their child should never be silenced,” said Brenda Lilly. “This ruling affirms our right to share our son’s story and pursue justice for Brian, Jr., and protect student athletes in the future.”

Raising Awareness for Student-Athlete Welfare

The case has brought attention to the treatment of student-athletes and the mental health challenges they may encounter. The Lillys aim for their efforts to inspire reforms and help prevent similar incidents.

“This isn’t just about winning a case,” said Brian Lilly, Sr. “It’s about making sure no other family has to go through what we have endured.”

The Lillys' Complaint in federal court is Lilly v. University of California-San Diego, Case No. 21-CV-1703, and Bond's Complaint in state court is Bond v. The Regents of the University of California, Case No. 37-2023-00003481-CU-WT-CTL. The Fourth District Court of Appeal's decision in the appeal on the Court's website as Case No. D082738.

For more information or for interview inquiries, please contact Garcia Hong Law.

About Garcia Hong Law

Garcia Hong Law are representing the Lillys. Garcia Hong Law is a San Diego-based firm specializing in litigation, including personal injury, wrongful death, and civil rights cases. Known for their compassionate yet fierce advocacy, the firm is committed to achieving justice for its clients. Garcia Hong Law is located at 10680 Treena Street, Suite 160, San Diego, California, telephone 858-255-0163, www.garciahonglaw.com.

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