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Bakersfield Native Crushed By Elevator In Long Beach

Grieving Family Wants Answers

Mark Christian - 23ABC North Of The River Reporter

POSTED: 5:41 pm PST December 8, 2011
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BAKERSFIELD, Calif. -- A woman who was crushed to death in a Cal State Long Beach elevator Wednesday was originally from Bakersfield.

23 ABC spoke to family members Thursday about their loss and how they are coping.

Annette Lujan, 48, grew up in Bakersfield and moved to Huntington Beach 10 years ago.



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"She was just fun-loving and full of life. We would have so much fun together. I am going to miss her so much," said Yvonne Garcia, Lujan's sister.

Garcia said her sister was on her way to work. She was stuck in the elevator for more than an hour before any official help arrived, but unfortunately, it was too late.

"I just wanted to know what happened within that hour. She was pressing the emergency button. Was the alarm working? Where was the fire department for an hour? They got there after 9 a.m.," Garcia said.

Garcia said the elevator doors eventually opened between floors, and some co-workers heard her screaming for help. They tried to pull her out when all of a sudden the elevator shifted, crushing her to death at the waist.

"That was my sister. I wish the elevator would have stopped when it felt her. If elevators can detect your arm when you try to stop the doors from closing, why couldn't it detect that her body was there?" said Garcia.

Lujan had worked at the university for nine years, and officials said everybody was affected by her death.

"People here are absolutely devastated. She was known by a lot of people. Everybody who works here is beside themselves," said Toni Beron, Cal State Long Beach spokeswoman.

The building has two elevators. One was shut down for maintenance, but some other employees said the working elevator had problems, too.

"These are mechanical pieces of equipment that don't care about human life. This is an unfortunate accident," said Capt. Rich Brandt, of the Long Beach Fire Department.

But unfortunately, those answers are not good enough for a grieving family.

"I want answers. I want them to give me answers for her family. She has a daughter. She was a single mom," said Garcia.

The Garcia family is headed out of town to try to talk to university officials. Funeral services are pending.

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