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Dr. Bruce Kennedy and Lesa France Kennedy



AP

Husband of ISC president killed in Florida plane crash

By NASCAR.COM
July 11, 2007
11:10 AM EDT

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SANFORD, Fla. -- Dr. Bruce Kennedy, husband of International Speedway Corp. president Lesa France Kennedy, died Tuesday when the plane he was piloting crashed.

Four other persons were killed, including two children, Sanford Fire Chief Gerard Ransom confirmed.

Ramsey Poston, NASCAR's managing director of corporate communications, released the following statement:

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"This morning, at approximately 8:40 a.m. Eastern Time, a Cessna 310 registered to Competitor Liaison Bureau Inc. of Daytona Beach, crashed in a Sanford, Florida, area neighborhood. At this time, we can confirm there were two people on-board, including the pilot, Dr. Bruce Kennedy and Michael Klemm, a senior captain with NASCAR Aviation. Both were killed in the crash.

"Dr. Kennedy was the husband of NASCAR Board Member and ISC President Lesa France Kennedy.

"It is clear that numerous families were affected by this terrible tragedy and unfortunately several people were deceased or seriously injured. Our deepest sympathies and prayers are with all of those who were involved in this tragic accident and their families. We will provide additional information as it becomes available."

The victims on the ground were identified as 24-year-old law student Janise Joseph-Woodard, her 6-month-old son, and their next-door neighbor, 4-year-old Gabriela Dechat.

The little girl's parents, Milagros Dechat, 33, and Peter Dechat, 36, were seriously injured. A 10-year-old boy, whose name has not been released, was taken to Cincinnati Burn Center with burns over 80 to 90 percent of his body.

Kennedy reportedly was piloting the Cessna 310 when it went down about 8:40 a.m. ET shortly after takeoff from Daytona International Airport. The small plane was traveling from Daytona Beach to Lakeland on Tuesday when the pilot declared there was smoke in the cockpit. It was not clear who was flying the plane; NASCAR said it was Kennedy, but investigators said earlier it was Klemm.

ISC issued the following statement from executive vice president and COO John Saunders:

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"Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone involved in the plane crash that occurred this morning in Sanford, Florida. We are deeply saddened by the loss of Dr. Bruce Kennedy, and others that have been lost or injured in this tragic accident. We ask that you respect the privacy of the Kennedy and France families while they deal with this terrible loss."

The plane crashed into one house and the resulting fire ignited another house next door.

"It was an extremely intense fire," said Matt Minnetto, a fire investigator with Sanford Fire Department.

The National Transportation Safety Board will focus its investigation of the crash on "man, machine and the environment," NTSB vice chairman Robert Sumwalt said.

"We'll be reviewing the aircraft maintenance records and any other records associated with this airplane," he said. The investigation also will focus on any services the plane may have received before or during the flight, including fueling and maintenance.

Competitor Liaison Bureau Inc. is based in Daytona Beach and lists William C. France, the late chairman of NASCAR, as its registered agent in online records from the Department of State Division of Corporations. James C. France also is listed as an officer of the company.

Kennedy's death came just five weeks after the June 4 death of Lesa France Kennedy's father, Bill France Jr.

The Daytona Beach News-Journal and The Associated Press contributed to this story.



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