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The two friends were both Pope High School graduates. Barnes had just completed his freshman year at Southern Polytechnic State University, majoring in computer science.

Ronald and Linda Barnes filed suit Monday in Cobb State Court seeking unspecified damages against both Morris and Matthew C. Brooks, 19, who was following closely behind Morris in a Trans Am on the then-two-lane road.

The Barnes' lawsuit and a similar action filed in April by Julian and Ruth Hall contend the wreck would not have happened if Morris and Brooks had not been racing their cars.

Morris countersued the Halls in June, claiming their son caused the crash by pulling out in front of Morris' car. His position is supported by police investigators who indicated in the accident report that Hall had failed to yield the right of way when he turned in front of oncoming traffic.

Morris, who was not seriously injured in the wreck, was charged only with speeding. A traffic court judge found him guilty of driving 80 miles an hour in a 45-mph zone and fined him \$97 last year.

Brooks, whose car was not involved in the collision, was never charged.

"My clients are upset the criminal system didn't adequately deal justice in their son's death," said Matt Flournoy, who is co-representing the Barneses with Roger Rozen, a fellow Marietta attorney.

'96 fatal accident prompts lawsuits

By Scott Henry

Marietta Daily Journal Staff Writer

A high-speed collision that killed two young west Cobb men last year has prompted a flurry of lawsuits that have the victims' families accusing the survivors and a survivor's family accusing the victims.

The parents of both dead men, Michael Kevin Hall, 21, and Jeffrey Ryan Barnes, 18, have filed separate wrongful death lawsuits against the drivers of two cars they claim were racing north on Wade Green Road when the May 21, 1996, crash took place.

The wreck was one of several fatal accidents involving teenagers on Cobb roads in 1996, a year acknowledged by county authorities as the worst in recent memory for young drivers.

Hall was killed instantly when he turned his 1992 Ford Mustang left from Midland Drive onto Wade Green Road and was slammed broadside by another Mustang driven by Michael Adams Morris, 21.

Barnes, a passenger in Hall's car, was thrown from the vehicle, sustaining extensive head injuries that left him in a coma for a week at Promina Kennestone Hospital. He died June 1 without regaining consciousness.