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The Greenville News



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Emergency officials in Mississippi say at least 25 people have been killed by tornadoes that tore through the state on Friday night, destroying buildings and knocking out power. JULIO CORTEZ/AP

Murdaugh crime saga leaves stain on legal profession

Michael M. DeWitt, Jr.
Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK - SOUTH CAROLINA

We have all heard the ambulance-chaser jokes about lawyers: "What do you call a thousand lawyers at the bottom of the ocean?" "A good start."

Attorneys at law - especially personal injury and criminal defense lawyers - sometimes get a bad rap and are often painted with a broad, negative brush by society. Of course, there are many honorable, upstanding and ethical lawyers in our state bar who fight for their clients and serve a greater good.

Then along comes a criminal like Richard "Alex" Murdaugh to tarnish that image even more.

Murdaugh was once a well-respected member of a prominent legal family, but as a father, he was convicted of the unimaginable on March 2 - the June 2021 murders of his wife, Maggie, and younger son, Paul.

As a fourth-generation attorney, Murdaugh is also accused of committing the unthinkable: stealing from his trusting clients, his brother and lifelong friends, as well as the century-plus-old family law firm and every

See **MURDAUGH**, Page 2A

Federal relief bound for Miss. in wake of storms

Funding can be used for recovery after tornadoes

Leah Willingham
ASSOCIATED PRESS

President Joe Biden issued an emergency declaration for Mississippi early Sunday, making federal funding available to the areas hardest hit Friday night by a deadly tornado that ripped through the Mississippi Delta, one of the poorest

regions of the U.S.

At least 25 people were killed and dozens of others were injured in Mississippi as the massive storm ripped through several towns on its hourlong path. One man was killed after his trailer home flipped several times in Alabama.

Search and recovery crews on Sunday resumed the daunting task of digging through the debris of flattened and battered homes, commercial buildings and municipal offices after hundreds of

people were displaced, even as the National Weather Service warned of a risk of more severe weather Sunday - including high winds, large hail and possible tornadoes in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Georgia.

A tornado reportedly touched down early Sunday in Troup County, Georgia, near the Alabama border, according to the Georgia Mutual Aid Group. Affected areas included the county

See **TORNADOES**, Page 3A

Erwin's restaurant coming to downtown Greer

Samantha Swann
Spartanburg Herald-Journal
USA TODAY NETWORK

Rick Erwin's Dining Group is continuing its growth across the Upstate, following the October 2022 opening of The Vista (2017 Augusta St., Greenville). The dining group announced a new

restaurant, Rick Erwin's Greer, this month.

The dining group is taking over the former location of The Strip Club 104, which closed Feb. 24 after more than a decade at 104 E. Poinsett St. in Greer.

Rick Erwin's Dining Group Owner and CFO Michael Ivey said Strip Club 104 owner Jason Clark is a longtime

friend of the dining group and when Clark decided to close his restaurant, it seemed like the perfect opportunity to expand to a new and growing community.

While the location in downtown Greer is only about 15 minutes from

See **ERWIN'S**, Page 3A



Dick Harpootlian and Eric Bland talk in Alex Murdaugh's murder trial at the Colleton County Courthouse on Feb. 9. ANDREW J. WHITAKER/ THE POST AND COURIER/POOL

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