



What we know about the victims killed in the California wildfires



Los Angeles fire file pic

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At least two of the people killed in the Southern California wildfires tried to protect the homes where they raised families and lived for decades, while another stayed behind with his son who had cerebral palsy and could not evacuate.

Twenty-seven people are known to have died across the Los Angeles area after destructive wildfires fueled by dry conditions and powerful winds erupted Jan. 7

More than 13,600 structures have been destroyed and roughly tens of thousands people have been forced from their homes. Officials have said the true death toll is not known as the fires continue to destroy neighborhoods.

Here is what we know so far about the victims:

Anthony and Justin Mitchell

Anthony Mitchell remembered his father as a "protector" who would do anything for his family. His father, 67, a great-grandfather of 10 who shared his name with his son, died in his Altadena home. Anthony's younger brother, Justin Mitchell, also died.



Anthony said that his father used a wheelchair after a leg was amputated last year and that he refused to leave Justin, who had cerebral palsy and did not walk.

"He probably could have gotten himself out, but he wasn't going to leave my brother," he told NBC News. "He really loved his kids."

Anthony said he last spoke to his father around 5 a.m. Jan. 8. His father said they were waiting to be evacuated, but about 30 minutes later, his father called another family member and said he could see the fire across the street.

"Everybody is just distraught over what happened," Anthony said.

Anthony described his father as a leader who cherished his family. He gave each one of his grandchildren and great-grandchildren a nickname and was always willing to lend a helping hand.

"My dad loved his family," Anthony said. "Me and him had a long conversation, and he said: 'I want you to know that my kids and my grandkids, my nieces and nephews, you guys are all my legacy. You guys are my treasure.' He said, 'Money don't matter, property don't matter, my kids and my family are my treasure.'"

Justin enjoyed watching television and having people read to him.

"He was just a real sweet kid," Anthony said.