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Discovering Nursing Home Deaths After Hurricane Katrina

Sal and Mable Mangano, the operators of St. Rita's Nursing Home in the St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, were charged with 34 counts of negligent homicide and booked into a Baton Rouge prison. "Thirty-four people drowned in a nursing home when it should have been evacuated," Louisiana Attorney General [Charles Foti](#) said. "They didn't follow the standard of care of what a reasonable person would follow." But, a lawyer for the nursing home operators, [James Cobb](#), claims that his clients are innocent. "It's ridiculous to arrest these two people considering the problems with the evacuation at all levels of the government," he said. Reports of [additional deaths in New Orleans area nursing homes](#) are being carried by the news media.

AARP Visiting Scholar, [Dr. Bill Thomas](#) observes that these tragedies of nursing home deaths related to Hurricane Katrina "illuminates the morality of our society in the face of disaster." He explains: "Katrina has peeled away the mask that has so long hidden the injustice that would let men and women, our elders, faultless in their dotage and poor as any person in America, drown in water reeking of gasoline and sewage. They are dead and gone, beyond all human aid but we should not let their passing to go unmarked. In their deaths, we can find common cause for change. We know well that nature and time will always have their way with us but we can, we must, commit ourselves to seeing that, even in the face of natural disaster, the oldest, poorest and frailest among us are able to find shelter from the storm."

AARP is a strong advocate for taking care of our older citizens. We examine [housing choices](#) and offer [advice if there are nursing home problems](#).

Posted September 15, 2005 10:36 AM in [Aging](#), [Health and Wellness](#).

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