



NEWS RELEASE

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HAWTHORNE MAN FOUND GUILTY OF FIRST DEGREE AGGRAVATED MANSLAUGHTER

PATERSON, NEW JERSEY:

September 14, 2017

Passaic County Prosecutor Camelia M. Valdes announces that James T. Woetzel, 48, of Hawthorne, was found guilty after a jury trial in Passaic County Superior Court before the Honorable Joseph A. Portelli, J.S.C.

Jury selection commenced on July 24, 2017 and the trial started on August 7, 2017. On September 14, 2017, following just over a day of deliberations, the jury returned guilty verdicts on first degree Aggravated Manslaughter, first degree Death by Auto within 1000 Feet of a School, and second degree Death by Auto. Mr. Woetzel was found not guilty of Knowingly Leaving the Scene of an Accident Resulting in Death, a second degree offense. Mr. Woetzel is exposed to up to thirty (30) years in New Jersey State Prison on the count of Aggravated Manslaughter, subject to the No Early Release Act, up to twenty (20) years on the count of Death by Auto within 1000 Feet of a School, subject to the No Early Release Act, and up to ten (10) years on the Death by Auto count, subject to the No Early Release Act. Mr. Woetzel was remanded to the Passaic County Jail pending sentence, after Judge Portelli revoked his bail of \$200,000. Mr. Woetzel's sentence is scheduled for November 17, 2017, in front of the Honorable Joseph A. Portelli, J.S.C.

The State presented evidence at the trial that on August 10, 2014, at approximately 2:12 p.m., Mr. Woetzel drove his 2014 Dodge Ram truck through the barricades separating the Hawthorne Farmer's Market from the street on Grand Avenue, in Hawthorne, NJ and struck Ms. Donna Wine, 58, of Hawthorne, as she was standing at a vegetable stand, trapping her under the truck. Mr. Woetzel continued to drive for .36 miles prior to being flagged down by another motorist. Ms. Wine was pronounced dead at the scene after being dragged to Lafayette Avenue. Mr. Woetzel was found to be under the influence of Difluoroethane, the volatile substance found in compressed air cleaner.

The State was represented by Assistant Prosecutor Julie Serfess, and Assistant Prosecutor Stephen Bollenbach. Mr. Woetzel was represented by attorneys Leigh Saltiel and Jeremy Richmond.

Any inquiries may be directed to Passaic County Assistant Prosecutor Julie Serfess, who can be reached at 973-881-4848 or jserfess@passaiccountynj.org.



(Photo: James Woetzel)