



BCPO News

Scott A. Coffina, Prosecutor



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Mt. Laurel Woman Sentenced to 5 Years for Crash that Killed Husband

Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that a Mount Laurel woman was sentenced today to five years in New Jersey state prison for causing the death of her husband in late 2017 after the car she was driving left the roadway, struck a utility pole and overturned in a wooded area in Delran.

Tameka Lawson, 38, must serve 85 percent of the term before becoming eligible for parole under conditions imposed by the Hon. Gerard H. Breland, J.S.C. Lawson pled guilty in March to one count of Vehicular Homicide (Second Degree) as well as a motor vehicle summons for Driving While Intoxicated. The State had requested a 7-year prison sentence.

The investigation revealed that Lawson was driving along Hartford Road at approximately 11:15 p.m. on November 12, 2017, with her husband, Jamar Rentie, as a front-seat passenger. The car veered from the roadway, went airborne, and struck a utility pole.

Rentie, 38, was pronounced dead at the scene. Lawson was transported to Lourdes Medical Center of Burlington County in Willingboro, where she was released after an evaluation.

The criminal charge against Lawson was filed after toxicology tests revealed that she had cocaine in her system and a .109 blood alcohol content at the time of the crash.

According to information compiled by the New Jersey State Police, there were 591 fatal crashes in New Jersey in 2017, which is the most recent year for which statewide data is available. In 158 of those, alcohol and/or drugs were a major contributing factor.

Compared with the statistics from a year earlier in 2016, the number of fatal crashes increased by seven, and the number of fatalities increased by five.

"It is extremely disappointing, and unacceptable, that fatalities caused by impaired driving continue to remain at these levels," Prosecutor Coffina said. "There are options such as ridesharing services, or choosing a designated driver. Cases such as this are particularly tragic because they are preventable."

The case was prosecuted by Assistant Prosecutor Josh Dennis. The death was investigated by the Prosecutor's Office and the Delran Township Police Department. The lead investigators were BCPO Major Crimes Unit Detective Brian Miller and Delran Township Police Detective Dennis M. Rooney.