



# BCPO News

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## **Delanco Man Sentenced for 2018 Willingboro Double Fatal Collision**

Burlington County Prosecutor Scott Coffina announced that a Delanco man was sentenced today to 12 ½ years in New Jersey state prison for causing the deaths of a married couple during a collision two years ago in the jug handle at Route 130 and Bridgeboro Road in Willingboro Township.

Amish Patel, 31, must serve 85 percent of the sentence before becoming eligible for parole. The sentence was handed down in Superior Court in Mount Holly by the Hon. Philip E. Haines, J.S.C.

Patel pled guilty in November to two counts of Vehicular Homicide (Second Degree) and Driving While Intoxicated for the deaths of Robert Stephens, 52, and his wife Janet, 50, of Burlington Township, on January 13, 2018. He acknowledged in court that he had been drinking and at the time of the accident was travelling at a speed of more than 100 miles per hour.

The investigation revealed that at approximately 4:30 p.m., the Stephens' minivan was stopped in the jug handle waiting to cross Route 130 onto Bridgeboro Road when Patel, who was traveling northbound on Route 130, lost control of his BMW 440, entered the jug handle and crashed into the minivan.

The force of the impact propelled the minivan over the guardrail and down an embankment, where it submerged into a body of water that is part of Olympia Lakes. Autopsies revealed that both victims had drowned.

"Our thoughts are with the friends and family members of Mr. and Mrs. Stephens, who spoke so beautifully today about what special and selfless people they were," Prosecutor Coffina said. "This tragedy is made all the worse by the fact that it was entirely avoidable. There is absolutely no justification for anyone who is intoxicated to get behind the wheel."

Patel was prosecuted by Assistant Prosecutor Josh Dennis, supervisor of the BCPO Collision Analysis and Reconstruction Unit, and Assistant Prosecutors Douglas J. Bligh and Brandon Almeida. The collision was investigated by the Prosecutor's Office and the Willingboro Township Police Department. Assistance was provided at the scene by the Delran Township Police Department, Edgewater Park Township Police Department and the New Jersey State Police. The lead investigators were BCPO Detective Michael Reagan and Willingboro Township Police Detective Ed Walker.

**END**

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