

✦ by Heather Estudillo,  
MADD National Victim Advocacy Coordinator

## News From Courts Nationwide

### CHILD ENDANGERMENT

✦ **TENNESSEE**—A school bus driver with a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) of .21 percent side-swiped a parked car while driving a bus carrying 14 children, none of whom were injured. The 51-year-old female driver pleaded guilty to driving under the influence (DUI) and child endangerment charges, and was sentenced to 11 months and 29 days in jail—all but 30 days were suspended. She was required to complete DUI school, her driver's license was revoked for one year, she was fined \$1,360 and she served the rest of her sentence on probation. The woman also was fired from her job as a bus driver.

### DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

✦ **ILLINOIS**—A former police officer was sentenced to 12 years in prison after he pleaded guilty to two counts of aggravated DUI in the death of another person and one count of aggravated DUI causing great bodily harm. The 25-year-old man, who was off duty at the time, was driving with a BAC of .17 percent and caused a crash that resulted in the deaths of two teenagers.

### DRUG-IMPAIRED DRIVING

✦ **SOUTH CAROLINA**—A 73-year-old woman was killed by a 39-year-old drunk driver just minutes after she was released as a patient from the hospital. The offender, who had a BAC of .08 percent as well as marijuana and prescription drugs in his system at the time of the crash, pleaded guilty to felony DUI resulting in a death and was sentenced to 12 years in prison and a fine of \$25,000.

### HIGH BAC

✦ **MISSISSIPPI**—The maximum sentence of 25 years in prison was handed down to a 35-year-old man who was driving with a BAC of .33 percent

when he hit and killed a 2-year-old boy. The crash happened while the boy's family was stopped in traffic and the offender hit their car from behind. Because the offender left the scene of the crash, his sentence also includes a \$5,000 fine and an additional five years in prison, which will run concurrently. The drunk driver had three previous DUI convictions.

### HIT AND RUN

✦ **MASSACHUSETTS**—A 22-year-old impaired female driver hit and seriously injured a college student as she was walking on the side of the road. The driver did not stop, but she was quickly apprehended when police found her vehicle parked outside of a dorm. The offender was sentenced to three months in jail, 100 hours of community service, a \$500 fine and substance abuse counseling. She also was ordered to pay any portion of the victim's hospital bills not covered by health insurance.

### MULTIPLE OFFENDERS

✦ **FLORIDA**—Two men were convicted of DUI manslaughter for a drunk driving crash in which a U.S. Coast Guardsman was killed. Both drivers in the crash had a BAC of .08 percent and both were found to be at fault for the crash—one for speeding and the other for turning in front of the speeding truck. The victim was a passenger in one of the



## Victims' Rights Legislation

※ OHIO—In October 2005, the Ohio Senate passed House Bill 108, which allows injured victims of impaired driving crashes to receive victims' rights such as being notified of all hearings and outcomes of legal proceedings, making a Victim Impact Statement at sentencing and receiving information after sentencing. MADD Victim Advocates from Ohio diligently worked to see this legislation passed.

vehicles. Both men were sentenced to two years in prison, loss of their driver's licenses for life and 13 years of probation.

### PEDESTRIAN

※ NEW YORK—A woman who was planting flowers in her front yard was seriously injured when a man driving with a BAC of .25 percent drove his minivan into her yard and hit her. The victim was in a coma for three weeks before she died as a result of her injuries. The offender, who was convicted of manslaughter, drunk driving and leaving the scene of a crash, was sentenced to six to 19 years in prison.

※ NEW YORK—A 50-year-old man was sentenced to one to three years in prison after he pleaded guilty to a felony count of criminally negligent homicide and a misdemeanor count of DUI. The man, who was driving with a BAC of .13 percent, struck a parked car, which in turn hit and killed a 15-year-old girl.

### REPEAT OFFENDER

※ NEW YORK—A 34-year-old man was charged and convicted of his third DUI after he ran over a police officer as she stood near her patrol car—the officer suffered life-threatening injuries. The offender was charged with first-degree assault and

sentenced to 21 to 24 years in prison. At the time of the crash, he had no license and was on probation.

※ MISSOURI—A 40-year-old man pleaded guilty to his third DUI. While driving with a BAC of .27 percent, he caused a crash that killed a 19-year-old man. He was sentenced to 170 days in a detention center, 10 days less than the 180-day maximum for the offense.

### SOCIAL HOST

※ MICHIGAN—A 55-year-old woman was charged with providing alcohol to minors after police responded to reports of a party involving underage drinking. When the officers arrived, nearly 100 teens were at the woman's house, many of whom the officers witnessed consuming alcohol. The woman pleaded no contest to the charges and was ordered to pay a \$500 fine and \$2,500 in court costs.

### UNDERAGE DWI

※ NEW YORK—After drinking at a bar using a fake ID, a 19-year-old male with a BAC of .16 percent crashed his car, killing his best friend, who was a passenger. The offender pleaded guilty to second-degree manslaughter, second-degree vehicular manslaughter and driving while intoxicated. He was sentenced to one to three years in jail.