

For Immediate Release
May 9, 2011

**NAVAJO MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO DUI-RELATED
INVOLUNTARY MANSLAUGHTER CHARGE**

ALBUQUERQUE – This morning in federal court in Albuquerque, **Felix Washburn**, 21, entered a guilty plea to a one-count indictment charging him with involuntary manslaughter under a plea agreement with the United States Attorney's Office. At sentencing, Washburn, an enrolled member of the Navajo Nation, faces a maximum penalty of eight years' imprisonment, a \$250,000 fine, and three-years of supervised release. Washburn remains on release under pretrial supervision pending his sentencing hearing, which has yet to be scheduled.

United States Attorney Kenneth J. Gonzales said that Washburn pleaded guilty to killing Mae Tyler, a 48-year-old Navajo woman, on May 25, 2010 while operating a vehicle while under the influence of alcohol near Sanostee, New Mexico, which is located on the Navajo Indian Reservation. Washburn initially was charged with involuntary manslaughter in a criminal complaint filed on July 26, 2010, and subsequently indicted for that same offense on August 25, 2010.

According to the criminal complaint, investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Navajo Nation Department of Public Safety (NNDPS) revealed that, in the early hours of May 25, 2010, Washburn was driving a Ford Explorer SUV with two passengers, including Ms. Tyler who was in the back seat, after he had consumed a significant amount of alcohol. Before Washburn got into the driver's seat, the other passenger pleaded with him to let her drive because he was intoxicated, but Washburn rebuffed her entreaties. While driving on a straight road, Washburn lost control of the SUV and the vehicle overturned once and came to rest upright. Washburn and Ms. Tyler were ejected from the SUV. While the passenger got out

of the SUV to check on Ms. Tyler, Washburn got back into the SUV and drove a short distance before the SUV came to a stop. Washburn then fled on foot.

The complaint alleges that the NNDPS was notified of the vehicular fatality at 2:50 a.m. on May 25, 2010. It further alleges that, at 5:25 a.m. on that same day, an alcohol analyzer indicated that Washburn's blood alcohol content was .14, and a routine blood draw at a medical facility determined that Washburn had a blood alcohol content of .165 at 7:12 a.m. that day. In his plea agreement, Washburn admitted that he was intoxicated and driving recklessly at the time of the crash that resulted in Ms. Tyler's death.

The case was investigated by the FBI and the NNDPS, and is being prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorney Shana B. Long.

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