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PRESS RELEASE

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District Man Sentenced to 20 Years in Deadly Crash - Wrong-Way Driver, on PCP, Killed Mother of Four -

WASHINGTON - Ajene Jones, 35, of Washington, D.C., was sentenced today to 20 years in prison on charges of voluntary manslaughter and aggravated assault stemming from a traffic accident in April 2010 that killed a mother of four and injured her children, U.S. Attorney Ronald C. Machen Jr. announced.

Evidence showed that Jones was under the influence of PCP at the time of the crash.

Jones pled guilty in January 2011 and was sentenced today by the Honorable Thomas J. Motley in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia. Judge Motley sentenced Jones to consecutive sentences of 132 months for the charge of voluntary manslaughter and 54 months each for two counts of aggravated assault for a total sentence of 240 months.

The crash took place April 19, 2010. According to the government's evidence, at about 6:50 p.m., Mary Wimbush, 37, was driving a 1997 Toyota Camry in a southwesterly direction in the 3600 block of Alabama Avenue SE, with her four children riding as passengers. She had just passed through the intersection of 36th Place and Alabama Avenue, which is controlled by a traffic light, when her car was struck head on by a 1998 Dodge Ram 1500 Conversion van.

Investigation revealed that the van, driven by Jones, was traveling northeasterly on Alabama Avenue and was completely on the wrong side of the double yellow lines at the time of impact. There was no indication of braking on the part of either vehicle.

Witnesses told police that the van had been on the wrong side of the street for some period before striking the victim's car. The impact of the crash caused the Toyota to be pushed backwards and rotated approximately 180 degrees. During the rotation of the Toyota, it struck a utility pole and mounted the sidewalk. It traveled approximately 47 feet backward after impact.

The Dodge continued forward after striking the Toyota, coming to a final rest approximately 141 feet from the area of impact. Preliminary calculations based only on the momentum loss indicate the defendant traveling at a minimum speed of 52 miles per hour in a 25 mph zone, but the speed was likely higher. Civilians helped pull Jones from behind the wheel.

Ms. Wimbush was pinned in the Toyota, crushed under the dashboard. It took the D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department more than 45 minutes to extricate her. She died as she reached Medstar after being airlifted to the hospital. Her children – ages 2, 4, 7, and 10 – were hospitalized after the crash, with broken bones, lacerations and cuts.

Jones was also taken to Medstar with minor injuries. Toxicology screening indicated that he was positive for PCP. This, along with his physical condition, indicates that the defendant was under the influence of PCP at the time of the crash. The defendant did not have a valid license at the time of the crash and he had been convicted for DUI in the District of Columbia and sentenced to probation on December 9, 2009.

In announcing the sentence, U.S. Attorney Machen praised the investigative efforts of the Metropolitan Police Department, including Lead Detective Sheryl Harley, Detective Jeffery Folts and Detective Michael Miller of the Major Crash Investigation Unit, and Sixth District Officers William Smith, Jr., Carrell Newberry, and Juanita Thomas. He also praised those who worked on the case from the U.S. Attorney's Office, including Marcia Rinker of the Victim Witness Assistance Unit, Paralegal Specialist Sandra Lane and Assistant United States Attorney John J. Soroka of the Homicide Section, who prosecuted the case.

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