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Prince William County, VA

Prince William County Commonwealth's Attorney Amy Ashworth announces the successful prosecution of Gentil Mwenze Banze arising from the June 18, 2022, accident that killed a Lake Ridge man and his dog. On July 6, 2023, Gentil Mwenze Banze pled guilty to Involuntary Manslaughter while Driving Under the Influence. The case was heard by Judge James A. Willett of the Prince William County Circuit Court.

On November 16, 2023, Mr. Banze was sentenced by Judge Willett to 10 years in prison, the maximum term allowable under the law, and 3 years of active probation following his release from prison. The case was prosecuted by Senior Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Sarah Sami.

Commonwealth v. Gentil Mwenze Banze

In the early evening hours of June 18, 2022, the Defendant, Gentil Mwenze Banze, was driving his motor vehicle westbound on Old Bridge Road. Witnesses described the Defendant's vehicle as swerving in and out of his lane of travel, almost striking other vehicles, before veering to the right and leaving the roadway. The Defendant's vehicle entered the sidewalk and struck a pedestrian, Mr. Luis Alfredo Perez, Jr., who had been out walking the family dog that evening. After the Defendant struck Mr. Perez, Jr. and his dog, he crashed into the utility pole located in the area of Cape Cod Ct, bringing down live power lines causing an audible and visible explosion on Old Bridge Rd.

Investigator Chad Mason of the Prince William County Crash Investigation Unit noted that the Defendant had an odor of alcoholic beverage coming from his person, had a slight sway to his body as he was standing, had bloodshot and watery eyes, and exhibited signs of impairment in all three standardized field sobriety tests that he attempted. The Defendant later admitted to drinking Guinness Beer prior to driving and testing later confirmed the Defendant's blood alcohol content to be 0.11g/210L of breath approximately three hours after the crash had occurred. Unfortunately, both Mr. Perez Jr. and his dog succumbed to the injuries they sustained as a result of the crash.

The Office of the Commonwealth Attorney would like to commend and thank the Prince William County Crash Investigation Unit, particularly Investigator Chad Mason for their investigation of the case, and Arturo Guzman, Case Manager for the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney Victim/Witness program for the assistance provided to the victim's family.

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Amy Ashworth is the elected Commonwealth's Attorney for Prince William County and the Cities of Manassas and Manassas Park. She was first elected in November 2019. The Commonwealth Attorney's Office can be reached from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. every day by phone at 703-792-6050 or email at cwoffice@pwcgov.org.

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