

Kennedi Solomon

### A Brother, Father, Coach, and Son Gone

For decades drunk driving has been a major issue in the United States. On average one person dies every 50 minutes because of drunk driving-- that's 29 people every day. The pain that victims and their families have to deal with are extreme. Safe driving requires the ability to concentrate, make good judgements, and quickly react to situations. However, alcohol affects these skills, putting ourselves and others in danger. Although drunk driving fatalities have fallen by a third in the last three decades, it is estimated that more than 10,000 young people in the United States are killed each year. We should avoid being another statistic at all cost.

My best friend lost her uncle to drunk driving. I remember this took a major toll on her family. Their family were grieving the loss of a son, brother, and father of four. Her mother described this experience "as losing part of her soul." Philip Hayes Jr., 33, was killed in a car crash in the morning hours of Sunday, February 11, 2018. His death could have been prevented if the other driver had made the conscious decision not to drive while impaired. This unimaginable crash killed Philip and his friend, Jessica Picatte, a mother of seven, instantly when they were rear ended by Row Newborn. The driver has now been charged with two counts of felony death by vehicle and DWI. This tragic accident tore families apart.

Since then, their families have been advocates for safe driving. They have turned their grief into motivation. It broke my heart to see them grieve in such a way. This situation has made me a safe driver, because I vow to never drink and drive. This is especially important now and years to come, because I am about to attend college, so I have to have my own discipline and make the right decisions. It's not even about knowing your "limit," no one should drive after any alcoholic beverage. Others should be encouraged to advocate for safe driving because this easily

could have our family members. People have to know that there's other ways to travel than driving drunk. You may choose a non-drinking designated driver, ask for a ride, or call an Uber/Lyft. Lastly, it has made me a safe driver because I am watchful for other drivers. You can be doing everything safely, but you still have to be mindful of others that are showing signs of impairment. It is also important to contact law enforcement if you believe you see a drunk driver.

Driving under the influence (DUI) means operating a vehicle with a blood alcohol content level of at least 0.08 percent. However, even a small amount of alcohol can lead to harmful situations. Drivers may not even show symptoms of being under the influence, but that doesn't make it any less dangerous. It's important to remember that any form of drinking and driving is dangerous.

---

## **Family grieving after father of 4 killed in I-77 crash**

---



### Works Cited

Galbiseck, Carol. "Drinking and Driving - Effects of Drinking Alcohol." *Alcohol Rehab Guide*, 19 Nov. 2018, [www.alcoholrehabguide.org/alcohol/crimes/dui/](http://www.alcoholrehabguide.org/alcohol/crimes/dui/).

"Impacts of Underage Drinking." *Science NetLinks*, American Association for the Advancement of Science, [sciencenetlinks.com/interactives/alcohol/ebook/pages/drun-driving.htm](http://sciencenetlinks.com/interactives/alcohol/ebook/pages/drun-driving.htm).

WJZY. "Family Grieving after Father of 4 Killed in I-77 Crash." *WJZY*, 14 Feb. 2018, [www.fox46charlotte.com/news/local-news/family-grieving-after-father-of-4-killed-in-i-77-crash](http://www.fox46charlotte.com/news/local-news/family-grieving-after-father-of-4-killed-in-i-77-crash).