

Summerville Woman Pleads Guilty to Homicide by Vehicle

On Monday, June 13, 2022, Caitlin Elizabeth Milam, 22 years old, pled guilty without a recommendation from the State, to Homicide by Vehicle in the First Degree, Driving Under the Influence, Failure to Maintain Lane, Driving on the Wrong Side of the Roadway, Speeding, and Reckless Driving before Judge Brian House. Milam was sentenced on Wednesday, June 15, 2022 to 15 years to serve 8 in the Department of Corrections at a sentencing hearing held in Summerville, Georgia.

Milam spent most of the night of March 14, 2020 partying with friends. In the early morning hours, Milam's white Dodge Avenger was seen driving at an extremely high rate of speed past two witnesses at Mount Vernon Mills. Shortly after being seen at Mount Vernon Mills, at approximately 0630, Milam, who was traveling southbound toward Summerville, crossed over into the northbound lane on Highway 27 and struck a vehicle being driven by Haley Smith, 22 years old. Ms. Smith was on her way to work that morning. Ms. Smith's vehicle was overturned and she suffered catastrophic blunt force injuries and was pronounced dead at the scene of the accident.

Milam was found to have a blood alcohol level of .206 (the legal limit is .08) and a toxicology report showed that she had cocaine and a sedation hypnotic in her system. Evidence downloaded from the Dodge Avenger showed that five seconds prior to the accident Milam's speed increased as the steering wheel was turned to the left and the breaks were never used prior to the accident. Witnesses at Mount Vernon Mills, nearly two miles from the accident, stated that they heard the accident occur and described the accident as sounding like an "explosion."

Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit District Attorney Chris Arnt stated "we are proud to finally secure justice for Haley. Due to COVID and other issues, this case took too long to secure justice for Haley and her family. But I am proud of my entire Chattooga County team for keeping constant pressure on the system to ensure this case was resolved. Without their diligence and hard work to expedite the case, this case might still be open."

The case was investigated by Troopers Stephen Langham, Jonathan Maxwell, Logan Gass, and Scotty Smith of the Georgia State Patrol. Members of the Chattooga County Sheriff's Office including Chief Investigator Jason Burrage also assisted in the investigation. Lookout Mountain Judicial Circuit (LMJC) Assistant District Attorney Clayton Fuller was the lead prosecutor on the case and gave the closing argument in sentencing. Fuller was assisted by Victim Advocate Cara Parris, Administrative Assistant Jennifer McLamb, and Investigator Eric Sliz

"My team will never tolerate a person getting in a car under the influence of alcohol and drugs and taking an innocent life," added Arnt. "The Georgia State Patrol put together a strong case and I'm so proud of my team for never ceasing to pursue justice for Haley and her family no matter what obstacles they faced."

