

12-year sentence for woman who killed 18-year-old in car accident

Written by Staff Reports
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ALBUQUERQUE – New Mexico Attorney General Hector Balderas announced June 21 that Bernadette Etsitty was sentenced to 12 years for the DWI-based vehicular homicide of Roxana Saenz, the maximum allowed under the plea agreement. Etsitty was convicted by a guilty plea in April.

“Drunk driving devastates our families, and public safety depends on our state leaders to enforce accountability to keep dangerous drivers off the streets,” Balderas said.

On the evening of June 23, 2020, Etsitty drove drunk, swerving into oncoming traffic and crashing into a vehicle driven by 18-year-old Saenz. Saenz was killed instantly. Saenz had just graduated from Del Norte High School and was planning on attending the University of New Mexico to become a veterinarian.

Etsitty admitted drinking a 12-pack of beer and containers of alcohol were found in her truck. Her blood-alcohol results revealed an intoxication level at about twice the legal limit.

Several of Roxana’s family members spoke, including her father Leopoldo Saenz. He related that Roxana had planned on being the first person in her family to graduate from college, and was proud to work her first job at Blue Cross Animal Clinic in Albuquerque before starting the fall semester at University of New Mexico. Leopoldo stated he was sad to see how his family has changed from the crime of drunk driving that is 100% preventable.

The case was investigated by the Albuquerque Police Department and co-prosecuted by

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attorneys from the Office of the Attorney General and the Second Judicial District Attorney's Office. Maria Madrid with the Office of the Attorney General provided victim-advocate services to Roxana's family.

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