

Teen must plan her own funeral for killing boy

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Girl gets probation, loses license

MURFREESBORO — A Williamson County teen who backed over her boyfriend last year with a car and killed him has been sentenced to probation until her 19th birthday — and will be required to plan her own funeral.

Paige Mackenzie Walters, 17, pleaded guilty to vehicular homicide yesterday in Rutherford County, where the accident happened. Rutherford Juvenile Court Judge Donna Scott gave Walters a long list of things she must do to stay out of juvenile detention, including plan her funeral, stay in school and keep her record clean.

For her funeral, she must plan it in detail and find out how much services and burial would cost, the judge ordered.

"Even though this is the best possible outcome, none of us know what she's going through," the girl's father, James Walters, said. "She's definitely not the same girl she used to be."

His daughter has managed to keep her grades up and is scheduled to graduate from Brentwood High School this May, a year ahead of schedule, James Walters said.

Paige Walters, of 1424 Devens Drive in Brentwood, backed over William Long McGregor, 19, of 1220 Lipscomb Drive in Brentwood, on Old Fort Parkway about 2:20 a.m. Dec. 20, according to police reports. Police said she was intoxicated at the time.

According to Walters' attorney, David Raybin, McGregor had gotten out of the Volvo that Walters was driving to walk back to a party the couple had previously left. To get him back in the car, Walters put the car in reverse, and she subsequently backed over McGregor, police said.

Dena Walters, the girl's mother, said the loss the two families experienced is greater than anyone could imagine.

"It's not just the loss of her freedom, but (McGregor), too," she said.

"They were like two spoons. If they weren't at my house, they were at his. He was like a son to us, and she was like a daughter to them," she added.

District Attorney General Bill Whitesell said he debated whether to charge the girl as an adult.

"I wrestled with this," he told the court. "A 20-year-old woman was sentenced to eight years in the penitentiary for a similar crime, and I wrestled with that. ... This is a case where one or two years really does make a difference."

Before accepting the plea, Scott asked McGregor's father whether he was comfortable with the arrangement.

"I feel the exact same way," Roger McGregor said. "I think she could be a help to other kids, once she gets a handle on this."

Scott said accepting the plea wasn't easy for her.

"We all struggle with this," she said to Whitesell. "I'm struggling with assurances that my orders will be followed by state probation since she's not (living) in my county."

The plea agreement states, among other things, that Walters will lose her driver's license until she is 19, and she must share her experience with other teens. Part of the order requires Walters to speak to the county's Teen Safe program and to a group of youth in Scott's Operation Integrity program.

Raybin said he thinks the speaking engagements are a good idea.

"If it is peer pressure that causes teens to drink, then it will be peer pressure that causes them to stop," he said after the hearing.