

**News Release from
The Honorable Sandra Doorley
Monroe County District Attorney**

December 20, 2022

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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James Jacobs Pleads Guilty to Aggravated Vehicular Homicide and Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the 2nd Degree

Rochester, NY- On December 20, 2022, 35-year-old James Jacobs pled guilty to Aggravated Vehicular Homicide and Criminal Possession of a Weapon in the Second Degree for causing the death of Stephen Kneeland, after striking him head-on with his vehicle while intoxicated.

On March 20, 2022, around 9:45 PM, James Jacobs, who is a North Carolina resident, was heading eastbound on West Ridge Road in the Town of Parma when he crossed over the solid yellow lane marking into oncoming traffic. Jacobs struck Stephen Kneeland head-on, killing him instantly. Stephen's wife and children were traveling in the vehicle in front of him. The family was heading home to Lockport after a swim meet. Following the crash, police found a loaded firearm under the passenger seat of James Jacobs' vehicle. This case was investigated by the Monroe County Sheriff's Office and New York State Police.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Kelly Pettrone, Bureau of the Felony DWI Bureau.

"James Jacobs acted in an incredibly selfish manner, disregarding the safety of others, when he chose to drive under the influence of alcohol, resulting in the tragic death of Stephen Kneeland" said Assistant District Attorney Kelly Pettrone. "With his guilty plea, it is my hope that Stephen Kneeland's family can continue to heal while finding solace in knowing the defendant will spend a significant amount time in the New York State Department of Corrections."

"Stephen Kneeland died because of James Jacobs' poor choices," said District Attorney Sandra Doorley. "Although the defendant accepted guilt and is taking responsibility for his actions, nothing will bring back Stephen Kneeland, a husband and father. Homicides caused by DWI are especially frustrating because these deaths are 100% preventable. It is my hope that the community remembers the family of Stephen Kneeland this holiday season before anyone makes the choice to drive while under the influence of alcohol or drugs."

James Jacobs will be sentenced on January 24, 2023, in front of County Court Judge Meredith Vacca.

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