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PRESS RELEASE

DRUNKEN DRIVER SENTENCED TO 25 YEARS IN PRISON FOR VEHICULAR HOMICIDE IN IBERIA PARISH

2017 CRASH CLAIMED THE LIFE OF ST. MARY PARISH WOMAN

New Iberia, March 28, 2018: A Texas man was sentenced Wednesday in Iberia Parish to 25 years in prison by 16th Judicial District Judge Curtis Sigur.

Jesse James Romero, Jr., 37, of Hondo, Texas, previously pled guilty to vehicular homicide in the death of 58-year-old Jody Marie “JoJo” Charpentier on January 25, 2018. At that time, the court ordered that this matter should be billed as a crime of violence with a blood alcohol greater than .15 grams percent.

Romero’s blood alcohol level was 0.22 at the time of the fatal crash on April 5, 2017 on LA 86 at milepost 3.5.

Romero was traveling west on LA 86 operating a 2001 Chevrolet Silverado pick-up truck when he crossed the centerline and collided head-on with a 2007 Toyota Sienna van driven by Charpentier. Charpentier sustained fatal injuries as a result of the crash and Romero was taken to Lafayette General Hospital.

Romero has previous alcohol related convictions including a 2010 DWI in Red River Parish, a 2001 DWI conviction in Anderson County, TX, a 2014 liquor violation in Medina County, TX, and a 2016 DWI in Odessa, TX.

During the sentencing hearing, the court heard testimony from Charpentier’s three sisters: Jan Romero, Tammy Doucet, and Trudy Hargis. They described Charpentier, a retired educator in the St. Mary Parish School System, as a humble person and the glue that held their family together. They recalled Charpentier’s selfless nature, throwing receptions for her GED graduates and volunteering her time to teach inmates in St. Mary Parish, and commented on the irony of Romero being the type of person Charpentier sought to help.

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