

Lake showed 'wanton and reckless disregard for lives of others': Judge

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By choosing to drive in that impaired state, Judge Carnwath said he showed "wanton and reckless disregard for the lives and safety of others", which is criteria for criminal negligence convictions.

Mr. Lake had pleaded not guilty to the more serious charge of criminal negligence causing death, but guilty to a series of less serious dangerous driving counts.

10-11 beers

Judge Carnwath said he agreed with testimony given by a toxicology expert that at the time of the accident Mr. Lake would have had the equivalent of 10 to 11 beers in his system, or a blood alcohol content of between 205 and 225 milligrams per 100 milliliters. The legal limit is 80 milligrams.

Two tests taken a little more than two hours after the accident by Halton Regional Police showed the Bell Canada employee had a blood alcohol level of 180 to 185 milligrams.

With respect to sentencing, assistant crown attorney James Cornish said Mr. Lake had a previous record of three impaired driving convictions and one 'care and control' conviction between 1973 and 1976.

Defence lawyer John Belleguhen said two of the four convictions were actually 'care and control', in which his client was not driving, but was found by police asleep behind the wheel.

He had not served time for previous convictions.

Sentencing

The sentencing arguments turned into a stark reminder of the tragedy of drinking and driving, and the tragedy of alcohol abuse.

The defence presented a remorseful man that, since the accident, has given up drinking, undergone alcohol rehabilitation and joined Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

Two AA members testified that they believe Mr. Lake is genuinely battling alcoholism, and a social worker from Credit Valley Hospital, where he is enrolled in an alcoholism recovery program, agreed "he has worked hard."

"In my opinion," said social worker Candy Ross, "he has made a substantial amount of progress."

Mr. Lake's wife of 11 years, Denise, said there's been a tremendous change since the accident and since her husband has given up drinking. "His personality has changed," she testified.

"The way he is around people — he's more responsive and caring in a sober state."

Initially, she said friends and family were "very concerned because he expressed a desire for death because of

what he had done.

"Two people died needlessly. Another didn't have to... it wouldn't accomplish anything."

She said her husband has really pushed himself with counselling and rehabilitation.

"He knows he has to be punished. Once it is over with he has expressed to me that he intends to do as much as he can with his life to help others in this area."

The prosecution, however, outlined the loss suffered by the family and friends of the innocent victims.

"When Lorraine was killed, my life ended as well — a part of my family died," said Lorraine's mother Susan in an emotional address to a hushed courtroom.

"She was so full of life. She embarked upon every day as a new adventure. Nothing to her was ever dull or boring.

"When you get in a car and get behind the wheel, you and you alone take responsibility. You and you alone are accountable. When you take a life it doesn't matter what you do, you can't fix it.

"You can't put my heart back.

"What I want to ask is why can't we just stop this? Drinking and driving is murder."

Always hurt

Ms Benjamin said the hurt will always be there. "That can never be remedied no matter what happens."

The court heard from several members of AA, including one who is a full-time counsellor for Halton Hills Recovery House and a sponsor of Mr. Lake.

Reg (last names have been withheld at the request of AA), 42, said he's been sober for 11 years and gone on to be a full-time counsellor at Halton Hills Recovery House. He said Mr. Lake "has been sober for nine months. Not only has he stayed sober but (he has) instituted a group in Oakville which meets Saturday nights. I believe he's sincere."

During the two-day December trial, court was told that on June 19 Mr. Lake had participated in a golf tournament in Caledon with some friends.

The other three members of Mr. Lake's foursome testified they had started drinking in the parking lot prior to teeing off about 9 a.m., and continued to do so on the course and during the awards ceremony which followed.

Mr. Lake then drove off in the direction of his home.

In an agreed statement of facts read before the trial, Mr. Lake had told police, "I was looking down the road. I wasn't looking where I was going. They should have the death penalty for what I did."



Photo by ROB KELLY

Helen Scisizzi (left) and Joan Phillips have been named Citizens of the Year for 1989 by the Milton Chamber of Commerce. Both are volunteers at Maplehurst Correctional Centre and Halton Women's Place.

Two celebrations for award winners

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The decisions concerning who would win were made Thursday at a chamber executive committee meeting.

"There are always choices to be made," said chamber general manager John Lawrence. "There were worthy nominations. We had a good crop of nominations this year, compared to some previous years."

Award winners receive plaques and certificates from various dignitaries, including Oakville-Milton MP and federal revenue minister Otto Jelinek, Halton North MPP Walt Elliot and Town of Milton officials.

Two recognition celebrations are held by the chamber for winners. On Thursday, Feb. 15 at 11:45 a.m. a lunch at Halton Hills Place will honor the Community Organization of the Year (Rotary) and Civic Improvement (Bill Trenwith) winners.

On Saturday, Feb. 17 at the Muddy Duck restaurant a dinner beginning at 7 p.m. will feature presentations to the award winners for Citizen of the Year, Business of the Year and Business Person of the Year.

Tickets are available from the Chamber of Commerce. They are \$15 each for the lunch and \$18 for the dinner. The chamber phone number is 878-0581.

Lifelong friends, two women share honour of being citizen of the year

By KAREN SMITH

You don't have to be a household name to become Citizen of the Year, as two Milton women have discovered.

Two long-time friends Helen Scisizzi, 56, and Joan Phillips, 49, are sharing the 1989 title after being chosen by the Milton Chamber of Commerce for their contributions to the community.

"We were totally floored when we found out about it," said Mrs. Phillips, a mother of three and resident of Willow Avenue.

The humble Mrs. Scisizzi and Mrs. Phillips, both volunteers at Halton's Women's Place and Maplehurst Correctional Centre, are unsure who nominated them and why they won.

"We've been doing this (volunteering) so long," says Mrs. Scisizzi, a mother of three and resident of Derry Road. "It's part of our Christian faith."

The pair, who say they work together well because they think the same, met 16 years ago at Knox Presbyterian Church where they are also involved in several outreach projects.

"We complement each other," adds Mrs. Phillips. "We think on the same level and we usually know what each other is thinking."

For the last eight years, both have done anything and everything to help residents at Halton Women's Place get their lives back in order.

Recently, Mrs. Phillips was hired as housing co-ordinator for the temporary shelter for battered women and their children.

"When we started, we told them we would do anything that other people wouldn't do," recalls Mrs. Phillips, a resident of Milton for the last 16 years.

A 15-hour day isn't unusual for the duo which helps women in need above and beyond the call of duty.

Mrs. Scisizzi, whose late father Doc Heslop is a former mayor of Milton, started leading bible study at Maplehurst 12 years ago. Mrs. Phillips joined her six years ago.

"It's not all giving," says Mrs. Scisizzi who has lived in Milton all her life.

"We get so much in return. I really like the people we work with. It's all very worthwhile."

The 1989 Citizens of the Year will be recognized during a community awards dinner and ceremony at The Muddy Duck banquet hall February 17.

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