

# Lawyer seeks balance in Hwy. 48 hit-and-run sentencing

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The new lawyer of a man convicted of failing to remain at the scene of a fatal Whitchurch-Stouffville crash is looking for balance when his client is sentenced later this month.

Defence lawyer Jason Rabinovitch was retained by Omar Sharef Hassan after the Toronto man's trial lawyer asked to be removed from his case. Mr. Hassan was convicted of failing to remain at the scene of a crash that resulted in the death of 16-year-old Whitchurch-Stouffville

resident Matthew Bobbett. Mr. Hassan has not been found responsible for causing Matthew's death and the penalty he receives should reflect that, Mr. Rabinovitch told the York Region Media Group.

A charge of criminal negligence causing death, laid against Mr. Hassan, was dismissed.

The sentence should balance the best interests of the community and Mr. Hassan, Mr. Rabinovitch said.

"Any time there's a loss of life in any matter, whether it is criminal or otherwise, makes it difficult for everybody, particularly the family who have lost a loved one and the

sympathies of everyone go out to them," he said.

Mr. Hassan, who sat with his lawyer during a brief hearing at the Newmarket courthouse Thursday, is to be sentenced at the Newmarket courthouse Jan. 22.

Mr. Hassan was convicted in October, but sentencing hearings were delayed in late November after Charn Gill asked Justice Edwin Minden to remove him from the case.

While the reasons for the request have not been disclosed, Justice Minden told the court the content of a pre-sentence report called into question if Mr. Hassan should be

represented by a different lawyer. Penalties for leaving the scene of a collision range from a fine and licence suspension to a maximum six-month prison term, according to the Highway Traffic Act.

Matthew was killed in 2002 after being hit by a car as he walked with friends along Hwy. 48 near St. John's Sideroad, north of Ballantrae, Aug. 25.

He was struck by a Ford Mustang and died a short time later.

Matthew's father Larry has said the loss of his son left him "emotionally violated".

Despite evidence at the scene,

which included two crucial DNA samples found on broken glass from a vehicle windshield, police were unable to identify the driver, Ontario Provincial Police said.

While Mr. Hassan was driving the car every day, he wasn't listed on the ownership because he couldn't afford to insure the Mustang, OPP Insp. Scott Naylor said.

Mr. Hassan and a friend agreed he would drive the car, but the friend would pay the insurance, with the promise of reimbursement by Mr. Hassan, Insp. Naylor said.

The car was reported stolen after the crash, he added.

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### Registration TIME



The York Catholic District School Board is now accepting registrations for Junior and Senior Kindergarten for the fall of 2011.

We look forward to registering your child at your local Catholic school or at our Admissions Office, Catholic Education Centre, 320 Bloomington Road West in Aurora. To register, please bring the following original documents:

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## Come Out to Meet Farid Wassef

Please join us Wednesday January 12, 2011 at Stouffville Latham Hall from 6:30pm to 9:30pm

We are holding an open public event to introduce Farid Wassef. He is looking to become Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) for the riding of Oak Ridges-Markham. He is seeking the nomination of the Ontario PC Party for this riding, which includes King, Markham, Richmond Hill, and Stouffville.

The recipient of the 2006 Canadian Pharmacist of the Year, Farid has been serving the community of Stouffville as a healthcare professional for over 20 years. He and his parents owned and operated the family pharmacy in the town of Stouffville for 32 years, which in 2006 merged with the Stouffville IDA pharmacy where Farid Wassef currently works.

Please join us for food and drink on Wednesday January 12, 2011 to find out:

- Who Farid Wassef is and his professional accomplishments
- Why he is looking to become MPP of our riding
- What he hopes to accomplish at Queen's Park

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Farid Wassef for MPP of Oak Ridges Markham

**Location:** Latham Hall 8 Park Dr. Stouffville

**Date & Time:** Wednesday January 12, 2011 from 6:30pm to 9:30pm

**Admission:** FREE

**Please RSVP:** Mr. Paul Barker at [paul.barker@diebold.com](mailto:paul.barker@diebold.com) or call 416 996-2012