

*** NEWS RELEASE ***

LOCKWOOD MAN PLEADS GUILTY FOR COLLISION THAT KILLED 68 YEAR OLD WOMAN

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Monterey County District Attorney Dean D. Flippo announced today that Thomas Wayne Nolen, age 65 and a resident of Lockwood, pled guilty for causing the death of Marie Councilman. Nolen pled guilty to one count of driving under the influence causing injury with an additional 3 years consecutive for causing great bodily injury to the victim, Marie Councilman. The defendant also admitted he suffered a prior strike from 1997 for 1st degree burglary. He will have to serve 85 percent of his sentence before being eligible for parole.

On June 21, 2016, at approximately 9 p.m., Marie Councilman was driving home from the Lockwood Community Center when the defendant hit her head on. The defendant, who had spent the day drinking at multiple friends' residences, ran away from the collision scene after his car collided with Ms. Councilman's car. Officers with the California Highway Patrol, Ft. Hunter Liggett Police, Monterey County Sheriff's Office, and Cal-Fire Fighters swept the area for the missing defendant. They located him 220 yards west of the collision hiding in the fields and arrested him immediately. The defendant had a strong odor of alcohol and CHP officers conducted a DUI investigation. The defendant had a blood alcohol level of .20 four hours after the collision. His blood alcohol level would have been as high as a .28 at the time of the collision, three times the legal limit.

Ms. Councilman passed away at 1a.m. on June 22, 2016 at Natividad Medical Center where she had been airlifted.

Marie Councilman, age 68, was a resident of King City. She was a school bus driver for 30 years before retiring and enjoying time with her family including her husband, children and grandchildren. Her family was present in court when the defendant entered his guilty plea.

The King City Office of the California Highway Patrol Jeremiah Cross, The California Highway Patrol MAIT team and Monterey County District Attorney Investigator Terri Edwards conducted the investigation and arrest in this incident.

Judge Carrie Panetta will sentence the defendant on March 16, 2017 at 8:45 a.m. in Department 4 to 7 years in California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

This case was presented by members of the District Attorney's Office specialized DUI Vertical Prosecution Unit. Funding for this program was provided by a grant from the California Office of Traffic Safety through the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.