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## ***WELLFORD WOMAN RECEIVES 15-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE FOR ALCOHOL-RELATED FATALITY***

A Wellford woman received a 15-year prison sentence today after she admitted to causing a fatal traffic accident while driving drunk.

Frankie A. Blakely, 32, pleaded guilty to felony driving under the influence with death before Circuit Judge Roger Couch.

The defendant accepted responsibility for the June 7, 2009 wreck that claimed the life of James "Jimmy" R. James, 49, of Greer. James was picking up cans on the shoulder of Highway 290 when he was struck Dodge pick-up truck driven by Blakely. James was thrown more 100 feet when he was hit by the truck. Blakely initially denied being the driver. She told investigators the driver jumped out of the truck and fled the crime scene. The initial suspect provided an alibi when questioned by police.

Blakely changed her story days later when she was confronted with forensic evidence and a blood alcohol reading of .21. Blakely voluntarily submitted the blood sample after the wreck, according to Principal Deputy Solicitor Barry Barnette.

Jimmy James worked for the Greenville Hospital System for 29 years. His brother told Judge Couch that his James often participated in community service activities. James James was trying to improve the appearance of the community when he was killed. Jimmy was also a donor to the new library in Greer.

Blakely's prior criminal record included convictions for driving under the influence, breach of peace, resisting arrest, malicious injury to property, possession of cocaine and possession of a gambling device.

She will serve more than 12 years of the new prison sentence before she is eligible for release.

For more information, contact Murray Glenn at 809-4892.

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