

GAFFNEY MAN RECEIVES 12-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE FOR DUI CONVICTION

A Gaffney man received a 12-year prison sentence for driving drunk when he caused wreck that claimed the life of a local woman.

Brian P. Messer, 24, pleaded guilty to felony driving under the influence with a death and second offense driving under suspension moments before his trial was scheduled to begin today at the Cherokee County Courthouse. Messer accepted responsibility for April 6, 2004 death of Judy Michelle Dubois, 29, of Spartanburg. The fatal wreck occurred about 4:50 a.m. on I-85 near exit 103. Messer and Dubois were traveling south in a 1990 Suburu when the car ran off the right shoulder of the road, struck a fence and overturned several times. Dubois was ejected from the car and she died at the wreck scene.

Messer was taken to Upstate Carolina Medical Center with minor injuries. A blood alcohol reading measured .07. He also had Xanax, Marijuana and Valium in his system, according to Principal Deputy Solicitor Barry Barnette.

"This wreck is a good example of what happens when people drink, use drugs and drive," Barnette said.

Messer's criminal record includes a prior conviction for driving under the influence in North Carolina. He will serve 85 percent of the new prison sentence before he is eligible for release.