

OPEN LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY LIFE, DEATH, RESPONSIBILITY AND PENALTY

A few days ago, three students were in a terrible two-car collision on Hale Street. One student has been arraigned on drunken driving charges. Two female students in the other car were injured, one seriously. However, their ordeal is not just physical recovery any longer. Our thoughts and prayers are with the students and their families.

What about the rest of us? How often have we watched a friend drive under the influence, even drunk? How often do we stop them and take away their keys? How often do we just let them get behind the wheel of a car and hope they get home safely? I am afraid to say, far too often!

OUR ATTITUDES AND ACCEPTANCE OF DRUNK DRIVERS MUST STOP

The innocent should not suffer because of drunk drivers who care little about themselves and others. If we don't change our behavior, the police will. The law is clear on Operating Under the Influence (OUI):

1st Offense (No accident)

Jail time not more than 2 ½ years, fine \$500 - \$5,000, and license suspended 1 year

2nd Offense (No accident)

Mandatory jail 30 days to 2 ½ years, fine \$600-\$10,000, and loss of license for 2 years

Operating with suspended/revoked license and driving OUI

Mandatory jail time of not less than 1 year and fine \$2,500-\$10,000

NOW LISTEN CAREFULLY – IT GETS MORE SERIOUS

Causing Serious Bodily Injury while OUI

Mandatory jail time of 2 ½ years to 10 years, fine of \$5,000, and loss of license for 2 years

Homicide while OUI

Mandatory jail time of 2 ½ years to 15 years, fine of \$5,000, and possible loss of license for life

Of course, anyone providing alcohol to someone caught OUI is subject to the conditions of the Host Liability Law and may also be held responsible and accountable for financial restitution.

If this isn't enough to help persuade you to stop driving drunk, there is one more thought. If you and your family are spending \$100,000 to help you become educated, why would you throw it away with a record that will follow you for the rest of your life? A record could prevent you from being hired in criminal justice, health professions, and in many businesses.

Do we need to say more?

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President