

Another Trajedy

The effects of drinking and driving is something that my family has experienced first-hand. My dad was a rising minor league baseball pitcher with the New York Yankees and played with Mariana Rivera, Andy Petite and Jorge Posada. Like most boys, his dream was to play in the major leagues but sometimes dreams are not realized. A drunk driver changed everything for him in October of 1995 after hitting him head-on in a devastating car accident in Waxahachie, Texas. The offender crossed over the median, hit a state Trooper's car first and careened into my dad's car head-on at a high rate of speed. He spent several months in a rehabilitation hospital, while the offender served jail time with his 4th DWI, but ultimately would not be able to return to the elite level pitcher that he once was. Even though I was not born at the time, I have learned a great deal from his misfortune. My dad dealt with this life-changing event with integrity, courage and ultimately forgiveness. He became a positive force in my life that would help to motivate and inspire me years later as I pursue a college softball career.

Most people think about the physical impact of a car accident with broken bones or lacerations. While my dad had plenty of that to deal with such as a complete facial reconstruction, metal plates in his arm, a rod in his leg and a broken collar bone, the emotional effects seem to be the most crippling and long lasting for him. Over 24 years later, my father avoids driving on over passes, crowded roadways and on rainy days in general. Actually, he does not drive at all unless it is a necessity. My mom drives on any trip or excursion that we take and my dad must ride in the back seat. He still experiences a lot of anxiety because of the accident and memories of that rainy night so many years ago. He also cannot forget a career that could have been, something that he had worked so hard to obtain and had dreamed about for so many years.

As far as prevention, I believe that sharing personal experiences help teens and young adults to realize that something like this could happen to them. So many feel it will never happen to them because they've not had any exposure to a tragedy like this. Reminding others in the moment is also important and can help curtail those that may choose to get behind the wheel anyway.

In my young teenage life, I have taken a stand against drinking and driving. In fact, I will not drink because of my dad's experience. When given the opportunity, I will be a voice to my friends and those I come into contact with in hopes that I can inspire others to abstain from drinking and driving. As seen in my dad's life, there is just too much to lose; a coveted baseball career and a healthy body both physically and emotionally. Think before you drink and drive, it is a risk not worth taking.

A treacherous weekend on the night

Driver who caused U.S. 287 crash was legally intoxicated, police report

By **BARTON CROMEENS**
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Waxahachie police said today that the driver of a pickup who caused a three-car crash on U.S. 287 Saturday night was legally intoxicated and has a lengthy history of DWI violations.

Bonifacio Ledesma Jr., 31, of Waxahachie was northbound in his 989 pickup on Hwy. 287 at approximately 7:20 p.m. when his vehicle struck a Department of Public Safety car parked on the side of the road for a routine traffic stop. Ledesma's truck then reportedly veered across the median and struck a south-bound vehicle head-on.

A blood-alcohol test showed Ledesma had a .25 blood-alcohol level, and police said he has been arrested multiple times for driving while intoxicated.

Ledesma's three passengers — wife and two children — were ejected from the vehicle upon impact.

The driver of the south-bound vehicle, John William Coleman, 26, pitcher for the New York Yankees, was in his vehicle for about 30 minutes until firefighters were able to pull him out.



Scott Dorsett/The Daily Light

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(Top) The car belonging to John William Coleman, Corsicana, appears devastated after Saturday night's head-on collision.

(Left) EMS workers attempt to pull the 26-year-old John William Coleman, a pitcher with the New York Yankees, from his vehicle.