



NEWS RELEASE

August 16, 2017
Contact: Sue Lindsay
Public Information
303-835-5639

Man Sentenced to 3 Years in Drunk Driving Crash that Killed his Wife

A 50-year-old father was sentenced to three years in prison Wednesday for the drunk driving crash that killed his wife of 25 years in July 2016.

Steve David Atencio (DOB 08/08/67) was driving his Honda Civic with his wife in the front passenger seat and his daughter sleeping in the back seat when he attempted to enter the eastbound off-ramp for I-76 the wrong way at East 88th Avenue on July 23, 2016. He then cut across three lanes of traffic while attempting to get to the westbound on-ramp for I-76 and turned in front of a Ford Ranger pick-up truck eastbound on 88th Avenue which collided with the front passenger door of Atencio's Honda.

Atencio's wife, Serina Atencio, 43, had to be extricated from the vehicle and was pronounced dead at the scene. The couple's 24-year-old daughter, Latisha Atencio, was seriously injured but survived. Atencio's blood alcohol content was 0.233 an hour after the crash.

He pleaded guilty to vehicular homicide, DUI and careless driving causing serious injury. Atencio's three children pleaded for mercy for their father during his sentencing hearing Wednesday in Adams County District Court.

"This is an extremely tragic case," Deputy District Attorney Jake Woods told the court. "The defendant and his family have already suffered so much with the loss of their mother and his wife, but his actions resulted in the death of Serina Atencio and put numerous other motorists at risk as well."

Steve Atencio told the court, he "made the biggest mistake of my life. I feel imprisoned already with the emptiness I endure on a daily basis with feelings and memories of my beautiful wife who I love very much. It was an accident. I have to live with it the rest of my life."

Adams County District Judge Sharon Holbrook said, "This is an incredibly difficult case," but said Atencio chose to drive while he was drunk. "You committed an intentional act when you put yourself behind that wheel, especially with your family in the car."

Judge Holbrook sentenced him to 3 years in prison plus 3 years of parole, noting that he would likely be eligible for community corrections after serving at least 9 months of his sentence.