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GUZMAN SENTENCED TO PRISON FOR VEHICULAR MANSLAUGHTER

District Attorney Jeffrey S. Rosell announced that Julissa Ortiz Guzman was sentenced to 11 years in the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation for gross vehicular manslaughter while intoxicated, causing the death Kathryn Stokes.

On December 17, 2017, Guzman, who had been drinking all day and had a blood alcohol level of over twice the legal limit, drove west bound on Soquel Drive towards her residence in Aptos. Upon reaching the intersection of Soquel Drive and Rosedale Avenue, the intoxicated Guzman struck and killed 86-year old Kathryn Stokes who was crossing the roadway. Following the crash, Guzman did not stop her vehicle, instead she dropped off her passengers then drove home. Law enforcement officers from the California Highway Patrol and the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office followed leads, quickly located, then arrested Guzman.

The emotional sentencing hearing was attended members of the Stokes family. In court documents Stokes was remembered a beloved mother, grandmother, great-grandmother, sister, and aunt.

Guzman had previously been convicted of two alcohol-related driving offenses in 2017 and was on probation for one of those offenses. Assistant District Attorney Alex Byers stated, "Guzman's choice to drive while impaired exhibited a conscious disregard for human life and the court held her responsible for that choice and tragic its consequences."