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Man sent to prison for fatal crash

Manslaughter plea in drunken-driving accident leads to 3-7 years

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ALBANY -- Skeichy Albert quietly wiped tears from his eyes as he waited in a courtroom Tuesday to get a look at the man who killed his son.

Nearly overcome by grief, the soft-spoken and exhausted father had just traveled more than 8,000 miles to see fellow Micronesian Sasiano Suda be sentenced to 3 to 7 years in prison.

Albert's son, Joseph, 24, the father of two young boys, was killed in the Nov. 17 drunken-driving crash that also injured Michelle Burton of East Berne.

Burton was trying to turn into Crossgates Mall on Route 20 at 8:37 that morning when Suda, who was speeding, slammed into her.

Joseph Albert had to be extricated from Suda's wrecked 1998 Saturn and was pronounced dead at Albany Medical Center Hospital.

"I lost my son," the elder Albert said as he struggled with emotion. "I had to come see this guy." Joseph was a good son, he went on. "He was so friendly."

Joseph Albert had worked for Target, Price Chopper and Trans World Entertainment and hoped to pursue engineering and construction careers.

He also wanted to enlist in the military, added his older brother, Samora Albert. Seven years ago he left the tropical North Pacific nation 2,500 miles west of Hawaii.

Joseph moved in to pursue his American dream, Samora said: "I feel very bad. Nothing can replace how happy I was. He was my best friend, too."

In a statement read by Albany County prosecutor Mary Tanner-Richter, Burton described her lasting physical and psychological pain as well as the horror her 16-year-old son experienced for hours after the crash seeking to learn if she was alive.

On the other hand, she wrote: "I remember seeing you laying on a hospital bed snoring and incoherent. And then coming into the courtroom with a smile on your face. You don't seem to realize the loss you have caused."

Defense lawyer James Milstein said his client is truly remorseful.

Suda refused to make eye contact with the Alberts during the brief proceeding before acting state Supreme Court Justice Dan Lamont. But he did voice regrets just before he was led away.

"I want to say my apology to his parents and family and I say my apology to God," said Suda, who previously pleaded guilty to second-degree manslaughter and operating a vehicle under the influence of alcohol.

Lamont revoked the man's license to drive and said deportation, once the state term is served, is likely.

Albany County has seen seven fatal drunken-driving crashes in two years, Tanner-Richter said: "Each one is unique, but the bottom line is they are all devastating. I don't know what it will take for it to stop."

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