

## Revels' killer gets 20 years in prison

**Subheadline:** Drunk driver's sentencing brings degree of closure

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### Content

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Grace Revels was just 20 years old when a drunk driver killed her and a USC Union softball teammate on Feb. 7, 2020. Her family waited three years to hear the 20-year sentence that was given to her killer June 21 in a Spartanburg courtroom.

Yuriy Karpik, 27, pleaded guilty in the horrific wreck that killed the two young women and injured two others, a moment that Grace's mother, Connie Revels, said was much needed.

Karpik pleaded guilty to two counts of felony DUI resulting in death, two of felony DUI resulting in great bodily harm and one of damaging personal property. Karpik will serve at least 14 more years in prison, having already served three. He will also have to pay a \$60,000 fine. After serving his sentence, he will have another five years of home detention and then five years of probation.

"Instead of a week (of court), it was one day, which I have to say much better, because I was not looking forward to sitting through a week of it," Revels said. "It was a very emotional day, of course."

While Revels was thankful for the sentencing, she said it won't ever be enough, because it can never bring Grace back.

"I'll never hear her voice outside of a recording, never see her face outside of a picture. She sits on a shelf, in her urn in my room. That's where she sits day in and day out," Revels said in the courtroom.

"You'll never forget that you lost a child; it's always there," she said this week. "But it is comforting to know that he is fully admitting that he did do wrong, because he admitted to it. He said that he was wrong."

Revels said Karpik also apologized to everyone in the courtroom that day.

Reports said he was driving 30 miles over the speed limit and had a blood-alcohol level of nearly twice the legal limit when he crossed the center line and hit the girls' car head-on, killing Grace and Mia Stokes, 18, and injuring Stokes' identical twin sister Mallory and Devyn Royce. All four girls played softball together at USC Union.

## **Softball Grace's passion**

Revels said that playing softball was Grace's passion. A catcher, she was named to the NJCAA All Region X softball team. Grace was a special education major at USC Union, set to graduate in May 2020.

Revels said Lancaster High School honored her softball legacy by putting a sign under the scoreboard that says, "Forever in our hearts #10, Gracie Revels."

"We're just thankful that we live in a small community like Lancaster, where people have been so kind to reach out and help us and that is a great thing," Revels said.

Gracie's family started a foundation in her honor, The Gracie Revels Foundation. It has given two scholarships to collegiate student athletes and holds an event called Gracie's Locker, which helps collect sports equipment to give to those who need it.

"That was one of our biggest purposes for Gracie's Locker, to make sure that everyone would have the opportunity to play..., and they would have the equipment they needed to play," Revels said.

Revels said the foundation also organized a school supply drive with local hospitals to support children at the beginning of the new school year.

## **Support from MADD**

Outside of the foundation, Revels has found great support in Kimberly Cockrel with Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD). Revels said Cockrel will come out and support any event the foundation holds, and consistently checks in on the Revels family around accident anniversaries and Grace's birthday.

"I don't want anyone to ever have to have a MADD representative, but I'm telling you when you do have one, you're very grateful," Revels said.

The Revels family also honored Grace's 21st birthday, which she was so close to celebrating, by donating \$2,100 to MADD. It has followed suit for each birthday after, with \$2,200 for her 22nd.

## **Don't drive drunk**

After this tragic event, Revels said she hopes no one ever drives drunk, especially in an era when there are so many other options, like ride sharing.

“We live in a world now that there are 1,000 ways for you to get home from wherever you are, and you do not have to risk driving drunk or impaired in any way,” Revels said.

“People will think, ‘oh it was one drink, I don’t feel drunk at all,’ but anything could change your whole life and it could take someone’s child away from them and their mother,” she said. “I just discourage everyone from doing it.”

Revels said it is still too difficult to speak publicly about her daughter’s accident, but if anyone wants to share their story or have an individual discussion, her door is always open.

## Child images

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### LANNWS-07-01-23 GRACIE REVELS MUG Yuriy Karpik



### LANNWS-07-01-23 GRACIE REVELS 1 Grace Revels



**LANNWS-07-01-23 GRACIE REVELS 2**



**LANNWS-07-01-23 GRACIE REVELS 3**



**LANNWS-07-01-23 GRACIE REVELS 4**



**LANNWS-07-01-23 GRACIE REVELS 5**

