

Five tough impaired driving sentences handed down across Canada

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Marco Muzzo leaves the Newmarket courthouse on Feb. 4, 2016 after being granted bail pending his sentencing. (Craig Robertson/Toronto Sun)

TORONTO - An Ontario judge sentenced a 29-year-old man to 10 years in prison on Tuesday in a horrific drunk driving crash north of Toronto that killed three children and their grandfather. Marco Muzzo had faced the possibility of life in prison after pleading guilty to four counts of impaired driving causing death and two of impaired driving causing bodily harm.

Here are a five other tough sentences that have been handed down in impaired driving cases in recent years.

LIFE IN PRISON: A Quebec judge handed a life sentence to an "incorrigible" repeat drunk driver in 2009, but refused to give the man dangerous offender status as Crown prosecutors had wanted. Roger Walsh had pleaded guilty to running into Anee Khudaverdian in October 2008 after a night of heavy drinking. Khudaverdian, who used a wheelchair, was out with her dog on her 47th birthday. Walsh kept driving after the collision and was arrested less than 10 kilometres away after driving into a ditch. It was his 19th impaired driving conviction.

TWENTY YEARS: An Alberta judge sentenced a man to 20 years and six months behind bars in 2008 for a drunk driving crash that killed a young mother and her three little girls. The judge also declared Raymond Yellowknee a long-term offender and said for the first time that drunk driving causing death was a "serious personal injury offence" which meant those convicted of the offence could not apply to serve their sentences in the community, under house arrest. Yellowknee pleaded guilty to 10 charges in connection with the January 2006 collision, which took place the day he had been released from jail after serving a sentence for uttering threats.

TWELVE YEARS: An Ontario judge sentenced an unlicensed drunk driver to 12 years in prison in a 2009 crash which killed one of his friends. Lawrence Bush left his friend, who was a passenger in the vehicle, to die underwater after the car landed upside down in a stream. He had been out on bail on an earlier charge of impaired driving when he went on what a court called a "reckless escapade" with his friends near Sarnia, Ont.

TEN YEARS: A New Brunswick man was sentenced to 10 years in prison and banned from driving for life in connection with a drunk driving crash in April 2013 that killed a mother of two. Boyd Reginald Atkinson had pleaded guilty to impaired driving causing death and impaired driving causing bodily harm. He crossed more than two lanes of traffic before hitting the woman's vehicle head-on. He had four previous alcohol-related offences.

TEN YEARS: A Halifax man was sentenced to 10 years for drunk driving causing death in August 2015 after a crash in which his speeding vehicle collided head-on with a taxi. Drew William MacPherson was found guilty of killing a Halifax senior, who was a passenger in the cab, in the Sept. 2011 crash. MacPherson, who represented himself at his trial and sentencing hearing, maintained his innocence and had asked for a prison term of four to six years.

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