

Widowed husband hopes for best for drunk driver

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Photo: Widowed husband, Edmund Aunger

The husband of an Edmonton woman who was struck and killed by a drunk driver while on a cycling holiday this summer on P.E.I. hopes the driver will find a way to deal with his addiction.

Clarence Arnold Moase of Kensington, P.E.I. was sentenced to six years in prison Tuesday for impaired driving causing death in the case of the July 14 accident that took the life of Elizabeth Sovis.

Sovis's husband, Edmund Aunger, responded to the sentence with thoughts regarding the man driving the van that killed his wife.

"My sincere wish has been that this man's life could be turned around," said Aunger.

"He's addicted. It's a mental and physical illness. And I'm not convinced that putting this man away for years and years is the best solution."

In his victim impact statement, Auger said Moase bore a heavy responsibility for the death, but Auger said he still carries some guilt himself.

"[It's] very difficult for me, because I planned the trip and it was absolutely clear that she would not ride on a road with cars," he said.

The highway near Hunter River where the accident occurred has no paved shoulder. Auger also pointed an accusing finger at the province, for promoting itself as a cycling destination without warning cyclists that many busy highways in the province have no paved shoulders.

Increasing sentences

In delivering the six-year sentence, Supreme Court Justice John Mitchell said P.E.I. was out of step with other provinces when it came to drinking and driving sentences.

Dalene Stewart with Mothers Against Drunk Drivers was pleased with the sentence, saying it sends a strong message.

"The fact that we're seeing them increasing these sentences is really starting to show that the courts are taking this sort of tragedy seriously," said Stewart.

Moase, who had four prior drunk driving convictions, was also handed a lifetime driving ban.