



## San Diego City Attorney Mara W. Elliott

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### **City Attorney Obtains \$230,462 in Restitution for Victims of Drunk Driver**

The City Attorney's Office obtained a restitution award of over \$230,462 for a San Diego woman and her mother who were injured when a drunken driver rear-ended their car in La Jolla in 2015.

At around noon on August 26, 2015, Amy Ruminski was driving on La Jolla Boulevard with her mother Ellen Bowen in the passenger seat and her 10 and 12 year old sons in the back. Suddenly, Defendant Jonah Hamilton smashed his sport utility vehicle into the rear of her car. A subsequent test of Hamilton's blood revealed a blood alcohol level of 0.17 percent – more than twice the legal limit. Hamilton admitted to officers that he had been drinking vodka that morning after taking prescription medication and then had gone to the beach to sleep it off.

Both Ruminski and Bowen suffered severe injuries as a result of Hamilton's actions. Ruminski struck her head against the steering wheel, which caused extreme migraines, as well as painful injuries to her neck and lower back. Bowen suffered an umbilical hernia as a result of the trauma to her abdomen by the seat belt upon impact.

On December 24, 2015, Hamilton pled guilty at arraignment to DUI – Driving with a blood alcohol content of 0.08 percent or more. The City Attorney's Office then began seeking restitution for the victims, a process which took more than two years and seven court appearances.

On April 5, 2018, Deputy City Attorney Jessica Castany presented the victims' case in court. Judge David M. Gill of the San Diego Superior Court ordered Hamilton to pay Ruminski \$1,238 in property damage (insurance deductible and towing costs), \$2,804 in medical expenses, and \$156,317 in attorney's fees. Judge Gill also ordered Hamilton to pay Bowen \$7,935 in medical expenses and \$62,167 in attorney's fees. In total, DUI driver Hamilton was ordered to pay \$230,462 to his victims.

**“Victims are entitled full compensation for the losses they suffer as a result of a defendant's criminal conduct,”** stated City Attorney Mara W. Elliott. **“Drunk drivers shatter lives. Let this be a lesson to those who drink or do drugs and then drive: the City Attorney's Victim Services Unit will seek justice for crime victims no matter how long it takes.”**

For more information on Victim Services and Resources at the City Attorney's Office please go to <https://www.sandiego.gov/cityattorney/resources>.

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