

# ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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## NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release

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2 Page (s)

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**MAYS LANDING** – Superior Court Judge Albert Garofolo sentenced a Cumberland County woman to eight years in prison today for Aggravated Manslaughter in connection with the May 14, 2008, drunk-driving crash that killed her boyfriend, First Assistant Prosecutor Murray Talasnik stated.

Aimee Jost, 33, of Vineland, must serve 85 percent of the prison term before parole eligibility for the crash that left Nicholas Smith, 29, of Vineland, dead. In addition to the prison term, Jost was sentenced to a 90-day term in the Atlantic County Justice Facility for Driving While Intoxicated. This was her second conviction for driving while under the influence. Jost's license was suspended for two years and the court ordered that an ignition interlock system must be installed in any vehicle she drives for three years upon restoration of her driving privileges, according to Chief Assistant Prosecutor James McClain.

Jost admitted at her Feb. 19 plea hearing, that she and Smith began drinking at a bar on May 13, 2008, and continued into the early morning hours of May 14, 2008. They headed north on Brewster Road in Buena Borough in Atlantic County at 2:10 a.m., when the vehicle left the roadway. The car struck several road signs and crossed back over Brewster Road, struck a fence post, rolled over and eventually came to a final rest on its roof. Smith, who was in the passenger side, was ejected from the car. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

Authorities determined that at the time of the crash Jost was traveling 76.9 miles per hour in a 45-mile-per-hour zone. It was also determined that her blood alcohol content was between a .21 to a .24 percent. The legal limit is a .08.

During an emotional sentencing this morning, several members of the victim's family addressed the court, including Amy Hague, the mother of Smith's young son Nicholas Jr. Hague, told the court through tears that her son misses his father so much and cries often. She said he is even going back to grief counseling. "His little heart is crushed," Hague said.

Jost, whose family and friends attended the proceeding, also spoke. She said that she has been an alcoholic for all of her adult life. She said that the fatal crash continues to haunt her. Jost checked herself into an inpatient substance abuse facility and was also active in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Jost expressed remorse, she indicated that she had deep feelings for the victim and thought about the incident everyday. "I know you may never find it in your hearts to forgive me but know that I loved him too."

Chief Assistant Prosecutor McClain stated to the court that there are many people in society who are alcoholics and have demons they deal with every day, but a message must be sent that people must make the decision not to get behind the wheel and drive while they are intoxicated. The only way that will be achieved is with a harsh sentence.

Prior to imposing sentence, Judge Garofolo expressed his condolences to the victim's family and stated that these types of events are occurring all too frequently. He told the family that he is sure that the loss of Smith has left a hole in their hearts. He also said that while he took into account Jost's attempts to deal her addiction, he said that people must be deterred from drinking and driving.

**Anyone with information involving serious crimes is asked to call the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office at 609-909-7800 or go to the Prosecutor's Office Web site at <http://www.acpo.org/tips.html> and provide information by filling out the form anonymously on the Submit a Tip page. People can also call Crime Stoppers at 609-652-1234 or 1-800-658-8477 (TIPS) or visit the Crime Stoppers Website at <http://www.crimestoppersatlantic.com/>. Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards for information leading to the arrest and indictment of those who commit crimes in Atlantic County.**