

Real punishment is to spend life without brother

Man sentenced for killing beloved sibling in drunken-driving accident

BY DAVID DOEGE
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Claude E. White Jr. was sentenced for killing his brother in a drunken-driving accident. But White's father says his son's real sentence was already under way.

"Whatever the decision," Claude E. White Sr. wrote to Circuit Judge Patricia McMahon last May, "Claude Jr. has already begun his sentence — a life sentence, life without his beloved brother."

By all accounts in court Tuesday, Claude White Jr. and his brother, Randy White, were close. As their father put it, they were "brothers by circumstance, friends by choice."

So when Claude White Jr. left court with five years' probation, no one was saying he got off easy.

On the night of May 22 and the early morning hours of May 23, the White brothers — Claude Jr., 34, and Randy, 31, — spent time together visiting friends and relatives and drinking.

The fun came to an end on the southeast corner of W. Appleton Ave. and W. Capitol Drive when the older brother unsuccessfully tried to round a curb at high speed in his 1986 Chevrolet. The car jumped a curb and slammed into a light pole.

Randy White suffered fatal chest injuries in addition to a broken leg, broken foot and broken neck. Claude sustained broken bones of his own.

Well Over Legal Limit

When the brothers were wheeled into the Doyne Hospital emergency room, both had blood-alcohol concentrations of 0.17%, well above the 0.10% level considered legal proof of in-

toxication in Wisconsin.

According to the medical examiner's report, Claude White Jr. identified his brother for hospital personnel before the two were taken to separate operating rooms. While medical personnel successfully mended Claude White Jr. in one room, Randy White died in the other.

Charged with homicide by intoxicated use of a vehicle, Claude White Jr. was under guard and not in the cemetery when his brother was buried.

"He could have made it an issue to be there under escort, but he knew the family needed its room to grieve," defense attorney Robin Shellow explained.

In June, Claude White Jr. pleaded guilty. As he awaited sentencing, letters from immediate family members, cousins and friends were sent to McMahon, all seeking mercy.

"Since the death of my son Randy, I have not had a chance to hug and kiss the son that I have left," wrote his mother, Margaret Anderson.

"I could have lost both my brothers that night, but thank God I didn't because as long as we have Claude Jr., we'll have Randy," wrote his sister, Regina Anderson. "I say that because they were two of a kind."

In sentencing Claude White Jr., McMahon stayed a five-year prison sentence, meaning he could have his probation revoked if he fails to turn his life around as he has vowed.

"I think it would be an insult to your brother's memory if you don't keep that promise," McMahon told him.

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