



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**4-17-14**

On April 17, 2014, Eric Wayne Pendleton, 39, of Denison, was sentenced to 45 years in prison for Driving While Intoxicated – 3<sup>rd</sup> or More. Pendleton was also sentenced to 30 years in prison for Intoxication Manslaughter. The sentences, which will be served concurrently, were handed down by 397<sup>th</sup> District Court Judge Brian Gary pursuant to a plea agreement reached between Pendleton and the Grayson County District Attorney’s Office.

On July 5, 2013, Denison Police responded to Texoma Medical Center where 43 year old Betty Ann Robinson was being treated for injuries, including serious head injuries, sustained when she fell off of a moving vehicle. Police spoke to Eric Pendleton, who told them that he and Robinson had been drinking and that while Robinson had been driving, she had opened the sun roof of the vehicle and had crawled up on the roof of the car to “auto surf”. Pendleton claimed he had grabbed the steering wheel as Robinson began climbing out of the vehicle, and that once she had gotten onto the roof, Robinson had fallen off and struck her head.

Officers discovered several bottles of alcohol in the vehicle and noticed that Pendleton showed signs of intoxication. Denison Detective John Watt went to Wal-Mart, where Pendleton said that he and Robinson had been prior to her injury. Watt was able to review surveillance video from the parking lot which depicted Pendleton getting into the driver’s side of the vehicle and Robinson into the front passenger seat. When confronted with the video evidence, Pendleton admitted that he had been driving and that Robinson had climbed on the roof to auto surf, and that he had hit a bump and she had fallen off.

Betty Robinson died from head injuries two days later. Laboratory tests indicated that Pendleton had a blood alcohol content of .244. At the time of Robinson’s death, Pendleton was on parole for a felony DWI offense. In 2009, he had been sentenced to 8 years in prison for his sixth DWI offense.

“This is another DWI tragedy,” said Grayson County District Attorney Joe Brown. “You just run out of things to say about the senselessness of it all.”

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Brett Smith. “The Denison Police did an excellent job in quickly obtaining the video evidence that broke this case,” said Smith. “Det. Watt moved quickly to establish who the true driver of the car was, and we might not have been able to prove this case without his good work.”

Pendleton will be eligible for parole after 15 years.