



PRESS RELEASE
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This week a Grayson County jury in the 15th District Court convicted Rick Lee Bates, 34, of Collinsville, of felony Driving While Intoxicated. Bates chose to have District Judge Jim Fallon decide his sentence. Fallon sentenced Bates to 35 years in prison.

On October 3, 2014 at 10:30 pm Collinsville police officer Michael Aguirre stopped a vehicle on FM 902 for weaving and failing to dim its headlights. Upon making contact, Aguirre identified the driver as Rick Bates and smelled a strong odor of alcohol. Bates failed a series of field sobriety tests, and Aguirre ultimately found an open and cold beer can wedged between the driver's seat and the center console. The jury deliberated less than 30 minutes before finding Bates guilty of Driving While Intoxicated.

During the punishment portion of the trial, Assistant District Attorney Brett Smith presented evidence to Judge Fallon that at the time of the offense, Bates had been on parole after being released from prison on a prior felony DWI offense committed in Tarrant County. Bates' parole officer testified that Bates was prohibited from drinking any alcohol as a condition of his parole. Smith also presented evidence to Judge Fallon that Bates had been convicted of DWI on four prior occasions, and had been convicted on several other charges, including Evading Arrest, Interference With Emergency Call, and multiple convictions for Assault/Family Violence, Violation of a Protective Order. Because of his prior felony convictions, Bates faced a minimum of 25 years in prison for the offense, and a maximum of life in prison.

"Repeat DWI offenders in Grayson County face judges and juries at their own risk," said Assistant District Attorney Brett Smith, who handled the case. "The folks we see on these juries are tired of people risking others' lives on the road, and not learning from the mistakes they have made."

"This man had plenty of opportunities to fix the problem," said Grayson County District Attorney Joe Brown. "When the message is not getting through, and other folks' lives are at risk, there is not anything else to be done than prison."

Assistant District Attorney Laura Wheeler assisted Smith in the prosecution of the case. Bates was represented by McKinney attorney Ryan Kreck.