

# NEWS RELEASE

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District Attorney

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## Jury finds drunk driver guilty of murder in fatal crash

CHARLOTTE, N.C. – Gregory Alan Wheeling, Jr. was sentenced today to at least 13 years in prison for the death of 28-year-old Kelli Sue Putnam. The trial, which began on November 6, 2017, was held in courtroom 5370 before The Honorable Yvonne Mims Evans, Superior Court Judge.

Wheeling, 32, was tried for second-degree murder. The jury found him *guilty* as charged. Judge Evans sentenced him to 156-200 months in prison.

In January 2016, Wheeling was with a group of friends at a Charlotte bar and restaurant when they decided to leave. A woman who had not been drinking drove Wheeling's car. Wheeling, who sat in the front passenger seat, became agitated with how slow she was driving and used his hand to press down her leg on the accelerator. After stopping at a gas station, despite being intoxicated, Wheeling demanded his keys and then got behind the wheel with his friends in the car. Witnesses testified at trial that he began speeding and driving erratically, weaving in and out of traffic along South Boulevard in Charlotte.



Gregory Alan  
Wheeling, Jr.

Meanwhile, Ms. Putnam was walking down South Boulevard after leaving a Carolina Panthers football game. She attempted to cross South Boulevard, and when she did so, Wheeling's car struck her, throwing her 191 feet. Ms. Putnam suffered severe trauma and was pronounced deceased on the scene.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg police determined Wheeling was driving 51-63 mph in a 35 mph zone when he struck Ms. Putnam. A blood analysis found that Wheeling's blood alcohol content was .13. Wheeling had previously been convicted of driving while impaired, and he remained under a court order that prohibited him from driving with a blood alcohol content of .04 or more.

Ms. Putnam's family expressed their gratitude for the outcome of the trial, which secured justice for their loved one.

*Note: For more information about the District Attorney's Office, visit [www.charmeckda.com](http://www.charmeckda.com). For updates and other information, "like" the DA's Office on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/charmeckda](http://www.facebook.com/charmeckda) and follow us on Twitter: @CharMeckDA.*

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