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Press Release

Arrest, Arraignment in Fatal Dedham Hit-and-Run

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The 21-year-old college student alleged to have been behind the wheel of a Ford Escape that struck and killed a Dedham woman crossing Washington Street late Friday night (Dec. 5, 2014) has pled not guilty and been ordered held on bail, according to Norfolk DA Michael W. Morrissey.

Nicholas A. Rivas-Vasquez, 21, originally of Hamden, Conn., and reportedly residing in the Boston area as a student, pled not guilty to Leaving the Scene of a Collision causing Death at his Dedham District Court arraignment this morning (Dec. 8, 2014.) Judge Michael J. Pomarole.

Assistant District Attorney Adam Lally requested \$10,000 cash bail; the court set \$5,000. Rivas-Vasquez was ordered to return to Dedham District Court on Jan. 8, 2015 at 9 a.m. for pre-trial conference. He is required to stay in Massachusetts

The victim in the collision was Jean Heppler, 54, of Pratt Ave in Dedham. She is believed to have been crossing the road in the vicinity of 77 Washington Street, near the intersection with Curve Street. Dedham Police were notified by a passer-by at approximately 10:48 pm.

Dedham Detectives and the Collision Analysis and Reconstruction Section of the Massachusetts State Police, assisted by the Motor Vehicle Homicide Unit of the Norfolk District Attorney's Office, worked through the weekend investigating the death. Police were contacted by an attorney for Mr. Rivas-Vasquez after authorities had located what is believed to be the involved vehicle parked behind his Boston address.

"The investigation, including collision analysis and forensic investigation, remains ongoing," District Attorney Morrissey said following the arraignment. "There is still much being done, but the good work of the Dedham Police and State Police working through the weekend has brought the case well forward, resulting in today's arraignment."

All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt.