

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
BLUE RIDGE JUDICIAL CIRCUIT



SHANNON WALLACE
District Attorney

Cherokee County Justice Center
90 North Street, Suite 390
Canton, GA 30114

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Cyndi Crossland
Public Information Officer
cbcrossland@cherokeega.com
770-479-1488

Cherokee County man pleads guilty to vehicular homicide charges in 2018 crash
State vs. Yann Fredrick Engamba

March 31, 2021 – District Attorney Shannon Wallace announces that Yann Fredrick Engamba, 20, has pleaded guilty and was sentenced for homicide by vehicle in the first degree, serious injury by vehicle, and reckless driving.

The charges relate to a single vehicle crash on November 27, 2018, involving four Creekview High School students on Old Orange Mill Road in Cherokee County. Witnesses reported that Engamba was driving his 2003 Infiniti G35 in a reckless manner and not maintaining his lane before veering off the side of the road and striking a tree.

The crash resulted in the death of Stephen “Stevie” Smith, 17, and serious injuries to Chase Burr, who was 17 at the time.

“On November 27, 2018, three young people made the decision to climb into Engamba’s car and take a ride, never expecting Engamba to put their lives in danger,” said Deputy Chief Assistant District Attorney David Holmes, who prosecuted the case on behalf of the State. “Instead of exercising due care to his passengers, Engamba chose to speed and drive recklessly. His actions led to a collision that ended the life of a promising young man and severely injured another.”

During the two-day hearing, which was conducted through *Zoom* video conferencing on March 17 and 17, a total of 15 witnesses provided impact statements on behalf of the victims.

Family and friends described Stevie as the type of person who had a zest for life, who always saw the positive in others, and who looked out for his sisters and his friends. Their impact statements reflected the grief and pain they carry to this day.

Several individuals also spoke of Burr, whose injuries left him no longer able to compete in track and field, ending his dream of someday being an Olympic athlete.

The State recommended a sentence of 30 years, with 10 to serve in confinement, 240 hours of community service, and other conditions. Defense attorney Scott Poole proposed a sentence revolving around probation and mental health treatment.

After accepting Engamba’s guilty plea on March 19, Cherokee County Superior Court Judge David Cannon Jr. sentenced the defendant to 15 years with a total of 12 months to serve in the Cherokee County adult detention

center and the remainder to serve on probation. The defendant must perform 2,400 hours of community service, pay restitution, have no contact with the victims' friends or family members, avoid drug and alcohol use, not possess firearms, complete a DUI risk reduction course and a defensive driving course, and submit to random drug screenings.

Judge Cannon specified that the defendant will serve approximately 40 days in custody each year for the next three years, to be completed the Tuesday before Thanksgiving through January 3rd of the following year. Judge Cannon explained that this sentencing ensures that Engamba will not be able to spend holidays at home or celebrate New Year's Eve for the next three years. Additionally, Judge Cannon wanted to ensure that the defendant spent the anniversary of this tragedy in custody.

"This was an unnecessary tragedy. A young life with so much promise was lost, and another life was permanently altered," said District Attorney Shannon Wallace. "Our hope is that other drivers will see that reckless decision making behind the wheel can lead to loss of life and will think before acting in such a way."

The Office of the District Attorney for the Blue Ridge Judicial Circuit is committed to seeking justice, acting with integrity, and collaborating with partner agencies in the criminal justice system in order to protect the citizens of Cherokee County and the State of Georgia.

###