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LANDRUM MAN RECEIVES 10-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE FOR FATAL HIT & RUN

A Landrum man received a 10-year prison sentence today after he admitted to fleeing the scene of a fatal wreck.

Emilio R. Edwards, 34, pleaded guilty to hit and run with a death. Circuit Judge Mark Hayes sentenced him to 15 years suspended to 10 years in prison with 5 years of probation along with 500 hours of public service to follow his prison sentence. He will serve 85 percent of the prison sentence before he is eligible for release. Mr. Edwards was also driving with a suspended license.

Gary Pope, 49, of Greer, died as a result of multiple body trauma sustained in the April 15, 2008 wreck on Highway 101 near Harvey Road in the City of Greer. Pope was standing in the road about 8:45 p.m. when he was struck by a Chevrolet van driven by Edwards. A witness reported that Edwards pulled into a nearby driveway, lit a cigarette and used a cloth to wipe the front bumper of his car before he drove away. Police found a driver's side mirror at the crime scene. Mr. Pope was hit by another vehicle after Mr. Edwards drove away from the scene.

Edwards turned himself into police the following day. Following his arrest, Edwards told police he was driving to work when Pope stepped in front of his car and left him no time to react. He admitted to briefly pulling into a nearby driveway before fleeing the area. He also told investigators where to find the damaged car. Principal Deputy Solicitor Barry Barnette presented the written statements of the witnesses at the scene as well as a statement from Mr. Edwards to Judge Hayes where Mr. Edwards admitted to leaving the scene of the accident after hitting Mr. Pope.

Family members and friends spoke to Judge Hayes and told him about Mr. Pope's life and how the actions of Mr. Edwards took him away from them.

"Hit and Run drivers bring horror and pain to their victims and their families," Barnette said. "The sentence in this case will send a message that their actions cannot be tolerated."

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