

# Student struck by car

## Suzanne McCrary is upgraded from critical to serious condition

Russ Smith  
The Pendulum

On October 18, Elon College senior, Suzanne English McCrary, 21, was hit by a car as she tried to cross South Church Street near Overbrook Drive in Burlington.

"Over the last 24 hours she had been upgraded from critical to serious," UNC Hospital spokeswoman Liz Baker said Tuesday. "Serious condition means that her vital signs may be unstable and that she's acutely ill."

Due to the extent of McCrary's injuries and family requests, Baker would not comment on the patient's prognosis or how long she would be in the hospital.

At approximately 12:30 Friday morning, McCrary and some of her friends were leaving Ham's Restaurant. Witnesses say McCrary crossed the eastbound lane of Church Street and was hit by a 1986 Honda, driven by Teresa Ann Byrd, 27, a resident of Burlington.



Suzanne McCrary

The collision occurred in the right hand side of the westbound lanes.

McCrary was taken from the scene to Alamance Memorial Hospital. She was then airlifted to University Hospitals in Chapel Hill where she was treated for massive internal injuries.

The Burlington Police report indicated that Byrd refused a breathalyzer test in the incident and was subsequently charged with driving while impaired.

McCrary, the daughter of Charles and Susan McCrary of Asheboro, N.C., has been an outstanding student-athlete. She was a scholarship tennis player at Pfeiffer College until transferring to Elon. McCrary was also an Elon Dean's list performer on three occasions.

McCrary, a psychology major, has planned to be a physical psychologist or a math teacher.

After arriving in Chapel Hill, McCrary spent several hours in surgery. Doctors placed her in a barbiturate-induced coma to minimize her bodily movements and the swelling in her brain due to the injuries.

Byrd, who knew McCrary from participating in the same women's softball league, pulled out of Overbrook Drive and apparently didn't see McCrary.

Laura Case, a close friend of McCrary's, said the victim has been making progress although being in a coma.

"Her eyes are reacting to light, and

she is responding to touch," Case said Monday. "The doctors were to start testing on her brain stem to evaluate the extent of her neurological injuries."

According to Case, McCrary's doctors aren't sure whether or not the movements were just nervous reactions.

If McCrary's condition were to worsen, Byrd could face such charges as death by motor-vehicle, or accidental manslaughter.

Lt. Randy Jones of the Burlington Police traffic department said that the chances of Byrd facing stiff penalties is not likely.

"If her (McCrary's) condition worsens, it'll be up to the arresting officer to take his report to the District Attorney," Jones said. "The D.A. would then decide whether or not to pursue further charges."

"This case was accidental, though," he said. "In North Carolina, accidental manslaughter is only a misdemeanor penalty."

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