

**INDICTMENTS HANDED DOWN**

**Brunswick County Grand Jury Indicts Teen Driver On Murder Charge**

**BY TERRY POPE**

A Shallotte teenager has been indicted on a charge of second-degree murder stemming from a fatal car accident near Ocean Isle Beach a year ago.

A Brunswick County grand jury Monday returned a true bill of indictment against Christopher Dale Bowers, 18, of Route 6.

The indictment states that Bowers "feloniously did of malice and aforethought kill and murder" Damon Patrick Willard, 19, of Gause Landing Road at Ocean Isle.

Willard was a passenger in a 1985 Chevrolet pickup truck Bowers was reportedly driving that crashed on N.C. 179 just after midnight on Sept. 8, 1990.

State Trooper B.D. Barnhardt, who presented evidence to the grand jury Monday, reported that Willard was thrown from the truck. The vehicle was traveling an estimated 85 mph when it ran off the right shoulder about .2 mile west of Ocean Isle Beach.

The vehicle then crossed the roadway, struck a ditch bank and overturned two or three times, Barnhardt reported. Willard was thrown 65 feet from the vehicle and died at the scene.

According to documents on file at the Brunswick County Clerk of Court's office, Bowers registered a blood alcohol content of .116 following the accident.

Barnhardt's report also states that

**Suspect's Bond Reduced**

**BY TERRY POPE**

Bond was reduced to \$25,000 Monday for a man accused of kidnapping, assaulting and robbing an elderly Ash woman in January.

Brunswick County Superior Court Judge Narley Cashwell lowered bond for Norman Marshall Gore, 29, of Ash, after the defendant's parents said they were willing to put up their home as bond.

Gore had been held in the Brunswick County Jail under \$75,000 bond since his arrest Jan. 30.

He is one of three men charged in the alleged robbery of a 91-year-old woman.

The victim testified in April against Gore's co-defendant, Melvin Asbern Whaley, 23, of Longwood, who was found guilty by a jury of first-degree burglary, larceny after breaking and entering and assault inflicting serious injury. He was sentenced to 37 years in prison.

Gore is charged with first-degree burglary, second-degree kidnapping, robbery with a dangerous weapon and assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill.

Another co-defendant, Robert Jefferson Collins, of Route 1, Ash, pleaded guilty to first-degree burglary and common law robbery in an agreement with the district attorney's office. He agreed to testify against his co-defendants.

Collins will not be sentenced until after Gore is tried in Superior Court, which may not be until December.

That is the earliest the State Attorney General's office can send a special prosecutor down to try the case, said District Attorney Rex Gore.

"It's possible that I, or someone on the staff, may have to testify as to a contested matter," said Gore.

Defense attorney William Woods of Whiteville has served prosecutors with subpoenas to possibly testify in the case.

"When that happens, the only one left to try a case is someone from the state," said Gore.

Cashwell ordered that Gore not communicate with the victim or go about her home if he is released from jail. He also asked the defendant if he understood that his parents would lose their home if he decided to flee Brunswick County.

The elderly woman testified in April that the men broke into her home, hit her over the head with a metal flashlight and took an estimated \$1,100 from her.

According to a statement Collins provided, and read in court by the district attorney at Whaley's trial, Gore allegedly hit the woman on the head with the flashlight when she refused to tell them where she kept her money.

the defendant admitted to drinking three to four beers when questioned after the accident.

Bowers and another passenger, Bryan Lawson, 18, of Shallotte, were also injured in the accident and taken to the hospital for treatment.

Bowers had been charged with involuntary manslaughter and driving while impaired. He entered not guilty pleas in court on Jan. 8.

Other persons indicted on charges by the grand jury Monday were:

■George R. Mason, 22, of Route 5, Shallotte, was indicted on a charge of felonious taking of shellfish from

a closed area between sunset and sunrise on Sept. 15.

According to N.C. Marine Fisheries Officer Dale Hewett, Mason is accused of taking 584 clams from polluted waters near Bonaparte Landing. The clams, valued at 10 cents each, were returned to the water.

■Johnny Ray Simmons, 36, of Castle Hayne Road, Wilmington, was indicted on a charge of felonious driving while impaired after having been convicted of three or more DWI offenses within seven years. The charge was filed by Ocean Isle Police Officer Dan Hunter on Aug. 4.

Simmons had been convicted of DWIs in New Hanover County District Court on Feb. 7, 1985; in Brunswick County District Court on July 23, 1985; and in New Hanover County District Court on April 25, 1988, the indictment states.

■Richard W. Bonds, 49, of Long Beach, was indicted on a charge of taking indecent liberties with children, allegedly involving a girl under the age of 16 on Aug. 23, it states. Charges were filed by Long Beach Police Officer Mike Phelps.

■Shane Eric Smith, 23, of Dale subdivision, Southport, was indicted on a charge of felonious driving while impaired after having been

convicted of three or more DWI offenses within seven years. The charge was filed by Trooper Barnhardt on Aug. 24.

Smith had been convicted of DWIs in Burke County, Georgia Superior Court on Dec. 5, 1990; and in Mayors Court, Fort Valley, Ga., on Feb. 20, 1989, and Jan. 21, 1985, the indictment states.

■Michael Scott Hamrick, of 167 Ocean Boulevard West, Holden Beach, was indicted on charges of two counts of second-degree burglary, one count of felonious breaking and entering, two counts of felonious larceny and two counts of possession of stolen goods.

He is accused of breaking into two homes on Ocean Boulevard West at Holden Beach between 2 a.m. and 4 a.m. on June 27. Hamrick allegedly took two walkie talkies, a guitar, binoculars, tennis shoes and groceries, all valued at \$485 from one of those homes, it states. Holden Beach Officer M.C. Hamilton filed those charges.

Hamrick also allegedly broke into a home at Buccaneer Hills North where a microwave, refrigerator, telephone, clothes and linens, all worth \$450, were taken on June 27, it states. Brunswick County Sheriff's Detective Gene Caison filed those charges.

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