## Driver in fatal chase faces prison with plea agreement

A 39-year-old Farmington Hills man has entered into a plea agreement with the Wayne County Prosecutor's office in connection with the death of an 8-year-old Garden Gity boy, after a police chase that started in Canton in February 2001.

John Steven Moffitt has agreed to John Stoven Moffitt has agreed to plead guilty to a reduced charge of second-degree murder with a sentence ranging from 22 to 40 years. Sentencing is set for June 6 before Woyne County Circuit Judge Ulysses Boykin.
Wayne County Prosecutor Mike Duggen called the agreement fair to both sides given the facts of the case.

"I think 22 to 40 years is a very good sentence," he said.

Moffitt had originally been bound over for trail on a charge of first-degree murder and receiving and concealing stolen property over \$1,000.

Moffitt was the driver of a stolen flatbed truck that was being chased by Canton Police when it ran a red light on Cherry Hill and Venoy in Westland and was struck by a Chevy \$1.0 pickup truck going south on Venoy.

A passenger in the pickup, Travis Miles, 8, of Garden City was killed in the crash. The driver of the \$-10, 25-year-old Michele Burgess, a neighbor and longtime friend of Travis' family, received minor injuries.

The supervision of the supplementation is the supplementation of the supplementa

pursuit. The chase continued east on Cherry Hill at speeds of 35 to 60 miles per hour until the crash at Venoy. Respondek was later charged with felony larceny and obstructing police. Duggan called the plea agreement with Moffitt "an excellent result ... a really important message."

with Moffitt "an excellent result ... a really important message."
"Had Moffitt pulled over when police tried to stop him, he probably would have been convicted of stealing shingles and gotten probation," Duggan said. "If you choose to flee a police officer at high speed, you run the risk. I'm not going to blame the cops. The fault is with the criminal who is fleeing and after this sentence, there shouldn't be any question of that."

Duggan said shortly after the original

crash that he supported the police decision to pursue. He said if the police had simply let Moffitt drive away, he could just as likely have tried to rob a convenience store and shot the clerk.

ience store and shot the cterk.

Then you'd be asking why your police left them get away," he said then.
Canton Public Safety Director John Santomauro credited Duggan with taking tough stance in this case.

His issuance of a criminal warrant in

"His issuance of a criminal warrant in this case sends a very clear message," he said, "that in Wayne County, vehicle pursuits will be prosecuted to the full extent of the law." Moffitt's attorncy, Marc Hart of Royal Oak, was in court Wednesday and was not available for comment at press time.

## Brightest and best honored at breakfast

The sun streaming in from the many windows at Glen Oaks Country Club in Farmington Hills lit the area where 25 of Farmington Schools' brightest and best students were honored Thursday morning.

and best students were honored Thursday morning. Students at the annual Superintendent's Awards of Excellence breakfast were products of their own drive and focus as well as the care and love of the parents they brought with them and the teachers each chose to honor. Administrators also attended the ceremony, which recognizes high achievers in academics, citizenship and service.

achievers in academics, citizen-ship and service.

The early morning sun lit everyone in the room equally, almost symbolic of the how their lives intertwined.

"The Superintendent's Awards of Excellence represents those who always do their best at what they do best, Tearmington School Board President Cathy Webb said.

sourd President Cathy Webb said.
Superintendent Bob Maxfield introduced the students after a short speech praising their "collective effort." He challenged them with the responsibilities of being high achievers
Maxfield read "Prayer for Chidren," a peem by Inn Hughs that highlights the different worlds of the haves and have-nots of society, the children of privilege and the children of prevery.
In part, Hughs writes: "We pray for children: who have no



Saying thanks: Honoree Matt Elsey chose Harrison teacher Susan Schultz as a teacher who has an impact on his life.

safe blanket to drag behind them, who watch their parents watch them die, who can't find any bread to steal, who don't have any rooms to clean up, whose pictures aren't on any-body's dresser, whose mousters are real."

Students are nominated by building committee. It's possible for a student to receive the award once when he or she is in middle school and once in high school.

The award winners, their gride and the teacher each honorod follow. The teachers are from the same school the student attends unless otherwise noted.

Shideh "Sherry" Almasi, 8, Power Middle School, Dabbie Calanchi.

- dle School, Maria Koeppen

  Priti Kothari, 8, Warner
  Middle School, Tami Barringer

  Anne Lieberman, 12, North
  Farmington High, Michael
  Horner
- Horner
   Silvia McCandlish, 8,
  Dunckel Middle School, Karen

- Silvin McCandlish, 8, Dunckel Middle School, Karen Halberg Middle School, Karen Halberg Katherine Mitchell, 8, Power Middle School, Michael Ehinger, Natalle Oliesko, 11, Northerine High, Jef Dwyer Lawren L
- School
   Staphanie Zoltowski, 9,
  Farmington High, Joe Jordan
  from Power Middle School

## Parade highlight



Local beauty: Miss Farmington, Tracy Finlayson waves to the crowd. The parade was her last local appearance before a June 2 picnic send-off for her trip to the Miss Michigan pageant.

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