

Father ordered to stand trial for fatal crash during lesson

The Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA - A judge on Thursday ordered a father to stand trial on involuntary manslaughter and vehicular homicide charges filed after his 15-year-old daughter struck and killed a woman during a driving lesson.

Judge Marsha Neifield ruled that there was enough evidence for the case against Richard Miller, 46, to proceed to trial, and scheduled Miller's arraignment for Aug. 31.

Miller was giving his daughter a driving lesson in an empty high school parking lot April 17 when she sped across a street and onto the lawn where Sarah McGinley, 18, was standing.

McGinley managed to toss her 1-year-old baby to safety before she was struck and killed. The baby was not injured.

Miller's daughter did not have a learner's permit and hit the gas pedal instead of the brake, prosecutors said. Miller told authorities that he tried to push the brake pedal with his hands as the car surged toward McGinley.

Fortunato Perri Jr., the attorney representing Miller and his daughter, said he respects the judge's decision but believes the accident does not rise to the level of criminal wrongdoing.

"Our position is that there should be no criminal responsibility tied to this incident," Perri said. "Regardless of the outcome (of the case), nothing's going to change the heartache from the unspeakable accidental tragedy this was."

The girl pleaded guilty to causing a fatal accident without a proper license. She was placed on interim probation and ordered to perform 200 hours of community service, pending an Aug. 30 sentencing hearing.

August 11, 2005 11:57 AM
