

OFFICE OF THE
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COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA

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District Attorney



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***** PRESS RELEASE *****

David Ernest Baskett Pleads Guilty to the Vehicular Manslaughter of Tiffany Ann Peterson

Re: *People v. David Ernest Baskett*
Santa Barbara Superior Court Case No. 24CR06024

SANTA MARIA, Calif., — Santa Barbara County District Attorney John T. Savrnoch announced today that 83-year-old David Ernest Baskett, of Santa Maria, was convicted after guilty plea and sentenced by the Honorable Judge Karen O’Neil to one year of probation. As part of plea agreement, Baskett pled guilty to one misdemeanor count of vehicular manslaughter.

On May 2, 2024, Baskett negligently moved a large forklift onto Skyway Drive, stopping it with its front tires at the edge of the road. The forklift’s 8-foot-long forks extended into the traffic lane, elevated approximately 4 feet off the ground — at roughly the height of an oncoming vehicle’s windshield. Baskett left the forklift in that position without warning approaching traffic.

At the same time, Tiffany Ann Peterson was seated in the passenger seat of her father’s small pickup truck which was traveling on Skyway Drive. The truck was traveling in the lane where the forks were protruding into the street. The truck continued in its lane, driving the speed limit. Baskett did not move the forklift and the forks hit the truck, killing Tiffany instantly.

District Attorney John Savrnoch added: “While no outcome can undo that harm, we are satisfied that Mr. Baskett has been held accountable for his actions.”
