

Philadelphia Daily News

October 30 1998

Hit-run suspect gets a break

By Dave Racher

Attorney A. Charles Peruto Jr. advised his 16-year-old Oxford Circle client to ask for a jury trial in the hit-and-run death of a school crossing guard in Feltonville. Peruto made the right decision. If Raymond Richardson had waived a jury trial, he would have been convicted of murder by Common Pleas Judge Lisa A. Richette. Instead, a jury this week acquitted Richardson of third-degree murder, convicting him of the lesser offenses of homicide by vehicle, involuntary manslaughter and hit and run.

"this was a clear third-degree murder, and you're very lucky," Richette told Richardson before deferring sentencing. Assistant District Attorney Mark Glison said Richardson blew a red light and rammed a car being driven by Barbara McIver, 50, at C Street and Wyoming Avenue, at about 7:30 a.m. on Oct 10, 1997. McIver, the mother of Police Detective John McIver, was on her way to her crossing post two blocks away.

She died 40 minutes later. Peruto blamed Richardson's action on "immaturity," and said the rented car was stolen from his client's mother. "Age was his defense." Said Peruto. "This was the first time he had ever driven a car. At the time of this offense, he was only 15, and just didn't have the experience to drive or control a car. This was not murder, there was no malice." Glison said a few minutes before the fatal crash, Richardson's car crashed into an automobile driven by Ishamel Ashmad at Front and Ruscomb streets.

Peruto admitted that Richardson was driving at about 70mph when the car struck McIver's vehicle, shoving it about 190 feet. Richardson ran from the scene and was arrested a short time later after his mother drove to the crash scene and told her son was the wanted driver. McIver had been a school crossing guard since 1994. Her death stunned police and residents in the 25th Police District, the headquarters at Front and Westmoreland where she reported.