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TRUCKER GUILTY IN FATAL CRASH

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BELLEFONTE -- Almost two years after truck driver Peter **Carrara**'s rig slammed into the car Bonnie Weaver was driving, igniting a fire that killed her, Weaver's son and daughter say they finally saw justice for their mother. **Carrara** was convicted Friday of homicide by vehicle and involuntary manslaughter for 57-year-old Weaver's death by a jury of 11 men and one woman that deliberated about an hour and a half.

"It is what it is," **Carrara**, 56, said afterward. "I can tell you all the things that I think are wrong, but the people didn't think they were wrong," he said of the jurors. "That's all I can say." Weaver's family said they'd had doubts and anxiety through the ups and downs of the case, which was plagued by delays and fights over whether the jury could be told that **Carrara** had methamphetamines in his system hours after the crash. "All the time ..." said Scott Weaver, Bonnie Weaver's son. "I mean, when it first happened, when we heard that he was out and everything, they never took him in for a couple of months. Then when they took him in he had bail and everything it was terrible for us. It was like he got away with it, and to finally have justice now, takes all that away." District Attorney Michael Madeira had told jurors **Carrara** was speeding in a 30-ton vehicle May 22, 2007, hauling gravestones through Walker Township at 68 mph when he switched lanes in an intersection and no-passing zone while driving with methamphetamines in his system. "I didn't have any doubts about the kind of driving that resulted in the conviction today and how bad that driving was," Madeira said. Weaver, of Hollidaysburg, was apparently lost while making a delivery for work around 10 a.m. that day. She unexpectedly turned left instead of right at the intersection of state Route 64 at Snyderstown Road in Walker Township, and **Carrara**'s truck bulldozed into the left side of her car, crushing it and trapping her inside as it caught fire. "He started an unbroken chain of events that led to the death of Bonnie Weaver," Madeira told the jury, stacking seven textbooks in a pile to illustrate **Carrara**'s reckless actions next to a single book showing Weaver's one mistake. "What did Bonnie Weaver do?" Madeira asked. "She turned left when she signaled right." **Carrara**'s decision to switch lanes to pass her instead of slowing "far outweighs what Bonnie Weaver may have done," Madeira said. **Carrara**'s attorney Brian Manchester argued Weaver's left-turn was the fatal mistake. "Mrs. Weaver turning back into the path of a vehicle without looking is the cause of this accident," Manchester said. "She wasn't paying attention to what's going on around her." But Madeira reminded jurors that an accident reconstructionist said the crash occurred because **Carrara** moved into the oncoming lane. If he had stayed in his lane, he would have missed Weaver's car even if he hadn't slowed, the reconstructionist said. Earlier in the day, testimony ended with local pathologist Dr. Harry Kamerow giving his expert opinion about the effect that the methamphetamines found in **Carrara**'s urine after the crash may have had on his driving abilities. Kamerow said he couldn't say with a reasonable degree of medical certainty that the meth in **Carrara**'s system did affect his driving. That was different than what jurors heard Thursday from Dr. Wagdy Wahba. Wahba said he was certain meth had affected **Carrara**'s judgment. Manchester later told the jury the prosecution went shopping for an expert, seeking out Wahba when Kamerow didn't give the answer they wanted. "They did not call him -- he said 'no,'" Manchester said. "They went to Dr. Wahba, all the way in Florida, who said 'yes.'" Manchester said he will not file an appeal. "I'm disappointed in the verdict," Manchester said. "But my client got a fair trial, And although I disagree with the verdict, there's no procedural errors. The jury did their job, I just don't like the outcome." Scott Weaver and his sister Carrie Butler held hands and cried as the jury foreman read the guilty verdicts. "She was a very good person, so I'm glad today happened," Scott Weaver said. "The trial went very good for her case, she was guiding it through. We're very happy today." On the other side of the courtroom, **Carrara**'s sisters also cried while he sat expressionless. "He's very upset," Manchester said of **Carrara**. "He's been

upset from day one that this woman passed. He's never from day one not shown sympathy and empathy for her family. ... Of course he didn't think he was guilty of the crimes charged, the jury did, and he's accepting of that." President Judge David E. Grine, who presided over the two-day trial, scheduled **Carrara's** sentencing for May 15. Manchester said he'll ask that **Carrara** be sentenced to six months in jail, and Madeira said he could ask for up to 18 months. "At sentencing, the judge can take into account fault, differently than the jury can," Manchester said. **Carrara**, who was a commercial truck driver for Granite Bellavance Transportation and Sons Inc., of Barre, Vt., at the time of the crash, has lost his job and his commercial license to drive. Sara Ganim can be reached at 231-4616.

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