

Fordham Observer

DOT Video About Distracted Driving Features Former Observer Editor

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The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) released a video about former Observer news editor Casey Feldman's death as a part of the "Faces of Distracted Driving" series on Feb. 22. This video, prompted by Feldman's tragic accident on July 17, 2009 in Ocean City, N.J., is the first video made by a member of the public that DOT has accepted. It is intended to educate the public about the importance of driving without distractions.

The video, produced by Feldman's father, Joel Feldman, includes interviews with former Observer editors Kelsey Butler, Brooke Burdge and Katie Feeney, all FCLC '10, as well as Casey's former roommate, Janine Repka, FCLC '10.

"I felt envious that parents could continue talking about their lost one with a mission and a goal," Feldman said. "Casey has a great story and Casey's face should be up there too to make a difference."

Mr. Feldman contacted the DOT when he first saw the "Faces of Distracted Driving" on their website around the end of November. "I convinced them they should look at a video that someone outside the Department produced and see if it should be added," he said. "They saw the video and immediately wanted to use it."

Repka said, "I was skeptical at first whether or not I should be a part of the video because I wasn't sure if I was emotionally ready. But ultimately I am really glad I did it. Having faces rather than statistics makes the statement more real [and] has more of an impact on people."

"I hope the people who watch this video will understand that driving distracted can affect others too. You are putting not just you in danger," she said.



Courtesy of U.S. Department of Transportation
A video about distracted driving was published about former news editor, Casey Feldman, who died in an accident on July 17, 2009.



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Feldman's death already changed New Jersey laws and went into effect on April 1, 2010. The state law helps protect the safety of pedestrians crossing the street. According to her memorial website, the new law requires "motorists to come to a complete stop and remain stopped for pedestrians in crosswalks as well as for pedestrians crossing at intersections where there are no marked crosswalks." If drivers do not come to a complete stop, the fine for a violation is \$200, double the previous \$100 penalty.

Butler said, "When I first heard about this project, I was definitely really excited. It was bittersweet, but I was happy to do something that can prevent the same thing from happening again to others.

"I think it is positive to get the word out there about her story because it is important to put out real stories that have potential to change someone else's life."

Feldman said, "I drove distracted before [Casey's death] and I'd dial my cell phone and hold it above the wheel like it is safer that way, or I'd brush crumbs off my clothes after eating.

"Making this video was definitely a healing process," Feldman said. "To see something good done only helps everything we do in her memory."

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