

To all of the people attending the Brunswick Complete Streets workshop today:

My name is Justine Wilson. I live in Massachusetts and am the sister of Joseph Thomas Wilson, Jr., who was killed on your highway on June 21, which also happens to be Father's Day. He was the American citizen referred to in the [Georgia Bikes' blog] article entitled "Brunswick fatality underscores need for connected facilities."

Joe was one of the most optimistic, happy, grateful people I have ever met. He was one of my best friends, and I miss him more than I can say. He also leaves behind a devastated wife, two teenage children, a brother, many nieces and nephews, and scores of friends and shipmates. None of us can understand why this senseless loss of life had to happen.

Joe was in excellent physical condition and rode his bike all over the world for exercise. He was an avid swimmer and ran in many marathons and triathlons. There are numerous medals and ribbons hanging on the wall of his home testifying to his determination to keep his body healthy.

Joe and his wife, Iva, just celebrated their 21st anniversary on May 21 of this year. He worked on many ships as a Chief Engineer for almost 30 years and was away from home for six months of every year. Joe had planned to retire soon, move back to their home in New Hampshire and make up for lost time with his wife and children. They had many plans for their golden years together which will never happen now.

This next paragraph was written by Joe's daughter, Ashley. "I just turned 17 on May 27. I know my father is the one giving me strength to go through this horrible time in my life. When I was having a bad day, he would always try to distract me by asking me what I had for breakfast or tasting one of my tears and telling me "why are you wasting those delicious tears?" That would always make me laugh. The hardest times are when I realize he isn't coming back from work so I can hide in the corner of the airport and jump on him when I see him coming through the gate. Whenever I asked him how he was, he would always reply "A day above ground is a great day", and "Better when I hear your voice". I'll never hear his answers anymore. We will no longer compete to see who can give the most "good morning" greetings to our neighbors when we go out for walks. He will not be present to see me graduate from high school later this year or hike all the mountains we had planned to when we moved back. The hardest part of all is when I realize that he won't see the powerful lady he always said I would be."

Joe's son, Brian, just turned 15 on May 11. He was so angry when he heard that a man who had been drinking and driving killed his father, he smashed his hand into a wall. Brian broke one of the knuckles on his dominant right hand. It will be in a cast for another 2-3 weeks and then he will need physical therapy and grief counseling. His hand may or may not heal properly. We are hoping and praying that Brian will be able to fulfill his dream of becoming a surgeon. He recently told his mother that it takes a woman nine months to give a life to a child, but it only takes one second to end his father's life. That is an amazing thought coming from a 15-year old boy.

In the name of decency and common sense, I am pleading with you to make whatever improvements are necessary to the area where Joe died so that another senseless and totally preventable death will be avoided. I hope that none of you will ever have to suffer the agony that we are going through now. Thank you.