



## Street racing has to stop, hero trucker's wife says



David Virgoe was big Nascar fan, his wife Debbie says.

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**Sitting on the front steps of her Lockhart Road house just north of Stroud, Debbie Virgoe lets out a wistful laugh at one of the last memories of her husband David.**

"He loved Nascar," she said, smiling as she looked off into the distance. "He was really into that. He disappeared for a while Sunday, and we wondered where he was. He was supposed to be out cleaning the shed, but he we caught him inside watching Nascar."

That was Sunday — Father's Day — the last day she would see her 48-year-old husband who died a hero when he jackknifed his tractor trailer Monday on Highway 400 to avoid hitting other drivers after he was cut-off by street racers.

A trucker since he started working for his father at 16, and real regular guy, David will be buried in his Nascar t-shirt and a pair of jeans, his wife said.

"That's the kind of guy he always was, and that's the way it's going to be," she said surrounded by family and friends Tuesday evening.

David, who leaves behind three grown children in their 20s and five grandchildren, didn't surprise his family when they found out he was killed while avoiding other vehicles.

"That was positively him," Debbie says. "It was a selfless act and that was him."

Debbie said in all his years of driving, David never had any serious close calls.

"People annoyed him because they did stupid things out there, but that was it," she said.

Police have arrested three men in connection with the fatal crash.

Two men face charges of dangerous operation of a motor vehicle causing death, criminal negligence causing death, criminal negligence causing death - street racing, criminal negligence causing bodily harm - street racing, and committing a common nuisance.

A third man was charged with dangerous driving.

Several witnesses described a Mustang and a Grand Am travelling at high speed and weaving in and out of traffic before the crash

happened just south of Highway 89.

The senselessness of street racing, especially on Highway 400, has Debbie wondering what can be done to stop drivers from being so callous on the roads.

"This street racing is just getting out of control. Something has to be done about it," she said. "I shouldn't be having to bury my 48-year-old husband."

Like many, she calls for stricter penalties such as longer jail sentences and banning convicted street racers from driving, but she also points a finger at automakers.

"The manufacturers should do something," she said. "Why do they need to make cars that can go so fast? Somebody somewhere has to get this problem out of control."

Less than 48 hours before David Virgoe was killed, a high-speed crash in the southbound lanes, also involving two young drivers, left 11 injured and closed the highway in both directions for 14 hours.

Police laid charges of dangerous driving and criminal negligence against two drivers.

David's son-in-law, Lou Bigl, compared street racing on Highway 400 to firing a gun into a crowd.

"Someone is going to get hurt or killed," he said. "It's just plain stupid."

Bigl said anyone convicted of killing someone while street racing should face maximum jail time. But he worries that may not happen, pointing to a Toronto case where two convicted drivers are serving their sentence at home after a taxi driver was killed.

David Virgoe's best friend and Debbie's ex-husband, Brian Hurst, is also veteran trucker.

Hurst said drivers in the GTA appear to be getting worse, and seem to have little respect for the big rigs on the highways.

"There are times I'm afraid to go work, thinking what could happen to me," he said. "People don't seem to have any sense out there. They just don't think."

Debbie and David were in the midst of purchasing a house in Angus after living in Innisfil for 18 years. But with the final legal documents unsigned, Debbie isn't sure if the move will happen.

She's also not sure about insurance, since her husband did not carry any personal insurance.

"I don't know what's going to happen," she said.

Meanwhile, a large extended family and many friends have been dropping by Lockhart Road to comfort her.

"I've even had truckers we don't know drop by to offer their sympathy," she said.

Meanwhile, friends and co-workers are helping to raise funds for the family.

Sherri Kun and Trina Clarke, who work with Debbie at the Mapleview Drive Canadian Tire store, have set up a trust account at the Stroud branch of TD Bank. The branch number is 3668 and the account number is 6269333 and cheques can be deposited in trust for Debbie Virgoe.

Funeral services are scheduled for Friday at the Innisfil Funeral Home, 7919 Yonge St., in Stroud at 2 p.m. Visitation is from noon to 2 p.m.