



January 27 is
Family Literacy Day



Laughter, tears and anger as 'hero' trucker mourned

Drivers, friends hope some good can come from death of trucker cut off by alleged racers

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STROUD—Parked just outside the funeral home in this small village yesterday were three tanker trucks. Their drivers, joined by 30 other truckers who chartered a bus, came to pay tribute to friend David Virgoe who died in a crash caused by suspected road racers Monday.

This outwardly tough brotherhood of men were teary-eyed and reflective speaking about Virgoe.

"He would also be the first guy to help you," said Peter Everett, a fellow driver from Wilburn Archer Trucking.

Virgoe, 48, was hauling silica sand on Highway 400, near Bradford, when two racers allegedly cut him off. Witnesses praised him as a hero for avoiding other vehicles and hitting an embankment instead.

It was to those accounts that family members clung while trying to make sense of the tragedy.

During the funeral, brother-in-law Ernie Brackin told the 300 mourners how he watched TV news coverage of the accident.

"What I remember are two young ladies who were standing there and thanking the hero that they didn't know and the effort that he put in. Through his sacrifice they were able to live on, and that's David," he said.

Another brother-in-law, John Brackin, said: "Hopefully from this something will come out of it. It would be a benefit to everybody to know that this wouldn't happen again."

Family friend Betty Johnston is helping to organize a petition that calls for lifetime driving prohibition for convicted street racers and a charge of second-degree murder carrying a life sentence for a road racer who causes a death.

"David got life. They shouldn't have the right to walk," she said.

During the service, David's wife, Debbie, sat in the front row, sometimes laughing, sometimes crying.

Minister Douglas Crocker told of Virgoe's big collection of CDs, all labelled "Mine." He told of Virgoe once outfitting the family's dump truck with so many lights "you would have thought a Christmas tree was coming at you."

He called Virgoe a hard-working man about to move into a new house and looking forward to retirement. He loved his job but there was nothing better than sitting in the backyard, listening to Jack FM and playing with his grandchildren.

"He had a heart of gold and he was loved by everybody," Crocker said.