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PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: September 24, 2020
Re: Charysteena Angeline Urbina
Felony DUI Conviction and prison sentence

For More Information Contact:

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Modesto, California - Stanislaus County District Attorney Birgit Fladager announced today that Charysteena Angeline Urbina, age 26, of Modesto, was convicted on September 11, 2020, of felony driving while under the influence of alcohol and drugs causing injury with enhancements for inflicting great bodily injury on their victims. Deputy District Attorney Donya Nunes prosecuted the case for the People.

On September 18, 2018 at approximately 5 AM, Urbina drove into the opposing lane of traffic on Carpenter Road in Modesto hitting another vehicle head-on. Manuel Russ, the driver of the other vehicle, was hospitalized in a coma for several weeks during which time he had a limb amputated and went through several reconstructive surgeries. Russ is now permanently blind and suffers from seizures as a result of the accident. Despite these new extraordinary life challenges Russ has done his best to turn his story into a positive message by speaking out at schools and other events on the dangers and lifelong effects of driving under the influence.

The two passengers in Urbina's vehicle sustained a fractured clavicle and facial lacerations. A chemical test showed Urbina's blood alcohol content to be 0.159% at the time of the accident, almost twice the legal limit of .08%. Further blood testing showed that Urbina was also under the influence of the active ingredient in Marijuana (THC) and cocaine. At the time of the crash, Urbina was on probation for a 2015 misdemeanor driving under the influence conviction. She was also pending charges for driving on a suspended or revoked license after being convicted of drunk driving.

On September 11, 2020, Urbina pled guilty to violating Section 23152(g) of the California Vehicle Code, a felony. She admitted personally inflicting great bodily injury upon Manuel Russ, causing him to become comatose and paralyzed due to brain injury along with two counts of personally inflicting great bodily injury upon the two passengers in her vehicle.

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Deputy District Attorney Nunes requested Urbina be sentenced to 14 years in state prison, the maximum punishment possible. Judge Rick Distaso heard arguments from both sides before sentencing Urbina to serve a total 10 years in state prison.

Under California's "Three Strikes" law, Urbina's convictions are "strikes." These may be used to increase any punishment if she is convicted of another felony in the future.

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