

Serial OVI Offender Sentenced to Eight Years

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Yesterday, a Warren County jury found Ralph Pottorf, Jr., 48, of Mason guilty of his 7th OVI offense in the last 14 years. Judge James L. Flannery immediately sentenced Pottorf to eight years in prison, the maximum sentence allowed under Ohio law.

Pottorf was driving north on U.S. Route 42 in Union Township on December 21, 2013 when he crashed into a fence on the side of the road. When the property owner heard the crash, he investigated and observed Pottorf driving the vehicle forward and in reverse, trying to disentangle the vehicle from the fence. When Pottorf was unsuccessful, he exited the vehicle and began walking south on U.S. Route 42. The property owner called 911 and a Warren County sheriff's deputy apprehended Pottorf nearby. Pottorf showed signs of being under the influence of alcohol, but refused to submit to a breath test.

Pottorf has a lengthy criminal history, including several prior felonies, and has served multiple prior prison sentences. This was his 3rd felony OVI offense, the most recent of which was in 2011. In choosing to impose the maximum sentence allowed, Judge Flannery observed that Pottorf had expressed no remorse for the offense and would continue to drive intoxicated with no intention of obeying the law. He also noted that this offense occurred less than a year after Pottorf had been released from prison on his last felony OVI conviction.

"Judge Flannery did the right thing in this case. His sentence sends a message that our office, and the Court itself, is serious about punishing serial OVI offenders. Unfortunately, they do not learn from their past mistakes, so the only way to keep the public safe is to lock them up to guarantee they cannot drive. As we see all too often, with offenders like Pottorf, it's only a matter of time of when, not if, some innocent person will be killed," Warren County Prosecutor David Fornshell said.

Fornshell also complimented property owner and Union Township Trustee Fred Vonderhaar for notifying 911, Warren County Sheriff's Deputy Stephen Ritchie for the prompt apprehension, and Assistant Prosecutor Mel Planas for the prosecution of the case.



Warren County Prosecutor

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