About LeeAnn

2003: LeeAnn was awarded a full athletic scholarship to Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland to play Division I Softball. MSU is a historically black university, LeeAnn was the first Caucasian softball player to attend the university.

LeeAnn was a member of the Golden Key Honors Society, Alpha Kappa Delta International Honors Society, National Dean’s List, and the National Scholars Honor Society.

2007: LeeAnn graduated at the top of her class, Magna Cum Laude, with a Bachelors of Arts in Sociology with a concentration in Criminal Justice.

7/26/08: Drunk Driver ripped away LeeAnn’s dream.

The offender Geremia pleaded guilty to driving under the influence and second-degree assault with a motor vehicle. He was sentenced to eight years suspended after 44 months in prison and five years probation.

Pictured to the left: LeeAnn walks with her niece at the Walk Like MADD 5k event in Hartford, CT. (2010)

May 2010 LeeAnn graduates from CCSU. She is presently working on her Masters of Science in Criminal Justice.

Below: LeeAnn featured in a MADD article.

The Financial Backlash

LeeAnn Vertefeuille

A DUI Victims Story

H e r  s t o r y  b e f o r e ,

d u r i n g  a n d  a f t e r  t h e

a c c i d e n t .

L i f e  c h a n g i n g  i n j u r i e s ,

a c c i d e n t  r e l a t e d  d e b t s

a n d  c h a l l e n g e s  t h a t

n e e d  t o  b e  a d d r e s s e d  t o

h e l p  f u t u r e  v i c t i m s .
July 26, 2008

LeeAnn was home for the summer with dreams of becoming a FBI Agent. It was a typical CT summer day, LeeAnn was traveling with two other motorcyclists headed to a cookout and taking a left turn into a residential driveway on Route 198 in Chaplin, CT when she was struck by a motorcycle driven by Glen J. Geremia, 53. Geremia was drunk, speeding and trying to pass Vertefeuille in a no-passing zone on a 1976 Harley-Davidson that was not insured or registered. It was his second drunken driving arrest.

Vertefeuille was critically injured and taken by Life Star helicopter to Hartford Hospital. She suffered from a severely mangled leg, lacerated spleen, several broken bones, among other injuries that led to numerous surgeries. Her leg could not be saved and was later amputated just below the knee.

LeeAnn has continued to face financial stresses as a result of this crime. LeeAnn’s motorcycle was financed and as a result of the accident it was deemed a total loss. She was left no choice but to continue to pay her monthly payments since the insurance did not cover the loss. Throughout her recovery she had to worry about the financial burdens this accident caused. Up to and even after the verdict LeeAnn has had constant reminders having to deal with debt collectors. Finally, LeeAnn was successful in settling her debt and paying $3,000.00. An out of pocket expense that should be paid through restitution by the offender. At last she thought this ordeal was over, and yet to her surprise she received a 1099-C Tax Form “Cancellation of debt”. The payment she made settling her loan had a significant impact to her tax returns, where she was required to pay an additional $2,000. The IRS required the debt that was cancelled to be reported as income. With the help of the OVA, LeeAnn was able to find a solution regarding her cancellation of debt, one that wasn’t readily recognized to her or most crime victims, but she had to file insolvency.

### Financial Burdens

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### Actions Needed:

1. Creation of a crime victim debt exclusion for cancellation of debt (1099-C) related to crime.
2. Revisions to the unfair practices of debt collectors to include prevention of victim harassment once the victim is certified through a representative of the state as such.
3. Halt of debt collection until criminal proceedings cease.
4. Transfer of the debt to the defendant.

### Collection Issues

The practice of debt collectors viciously going after crime victims, when the defendant has an order of restitution which needs to be enforced.

Crime victims have the right to fairness, respect and restitution in every state - either statutorily, constitutionally or both.

These practices of pursuing the crime victim undermine and obliterate the victims’ rights to fairness, respect and restitution.

Restitution from an offender means little if anything to a crime victim; especially when the crime victim’s credit has already been destroyed and has suffered by being hounded by the lender and/or debt collectors due to the actions of a criminal.