

## Motorcycle advocates angered as big names speak for defense

Staff Report

Florida's largest motorcyclists rights organization is angry that a slew of prominent people are lining up to speak on behalf a Lake County civic leader accused of killing a biker in a traffic accident.

Abate of Florida's Lake County Chapter said its members will turn out "in mass" when former assistant public defender and assistant county attorney Bruce Duncan is sentenced on Sept. 19 in circuit court in Tavares. He is charged with DUI manslaughter in an October 2009 crash that killed 61-year-old biker Herbert "Steve" Muller.

Florida State Rep. H. Marlene, Circuit Judges G. Richard Singletary and T. Michael Johnson, Lake-Sumter Community College President Dr. Charles Mojock, Tavares City Administrator John Drury, Lake EMS Executive Director Jim Judge and 14 other community leaders are listed as planning to speak on Duncan's behalf at the sentencing hearing.

"Being one of the top motorcyclists' rights organizations, ABATE of Florida feels the pending testimony by these elected and appointed officials is nothing other than a total abuse of their positions," group public relations trustee David Rich said. "Members of Florida's Legislature, judges, town officials and other government officials are all put into their occupations to work in the best interest of taxpayers, not to defend the actions of a personal friend that got drunk, made the wrong decision to drive his truck, and allegedly cause a crash that killed a biker."

Duncan was driving home from a Florida Gators football game when he reportedly turned his pickup into Muller's path. According to the Florida Highway Patrol, a half-empty bottle of vodka was found in the truck and Duncan had a blood-alcohol level of 0.16 percent -- twice the legal limit.

Duncan was unable to reach a plea agreement with the state and is expected to throw himself on the mercy of the court. Prosecutor Sue Purdy had wanted Duncan to serve 12 years in prison, based on the mandatory sentencing guidelines of 9 1/2 to 15 years.

He is in the Lake County jail pending sentencing.

Muller, a Navy veteran and retired postal worker from Mount Dora, was returning from Biketoberfest in Daytona Beach when the crash occurred near Duncan's home in Sorrento.

Purdy said a number of Muller's family members plan to attend the hearing.

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