

MEDIA STATEMENT

Kelly, Jimmy and I would like to thank the States Attorney office and everyone involved in prosecuting and trying this case. We appreciate their diligence and effort under extremely difficult and trying circumstances.

We would also like to thank our family, friends, and the entire community for the love and support everyone has provided during the past 6 months.

The outpouring of support and the MCstrong "Pay it Forward" movement here in McLean County, across the United States, and even around the world has been heart-warming and inspiring. We pray that kind of ridiculous love can become the norm in this broken world rather than simply a reaction to a senseless tragedy.

We realize no sentence imposed here today is going to bring Michael back. We can only hope and pray the publicity surrounding this tragedy and the sentence imposed in this case will act as deterrents to prevent others from drinking and driving. We hate to see one more family enduring what we have endured, and will continue to endure the rest of our lives.

Michael was a very special young man and his faith was very important to him. When Michael was a junior in high school he participated in a group study of Tony Dungy's book "Dare to be Uncommon." As part of the study he was asked to write his own obituary. Included in what Michael wrote was "I want to help people follow Jesus Christ and I want to make people laugh until I die."

Our promise to Michael is we will use the MCstrong movement and the Michael Collins Foundation to continue his mission. We will strive for his foundation to spread joy and the good news of Jesus Christ.

There is no doubt our work will include efforts to prevent drinking and driving. This community has been impacted several times in recent months, and we will work to eliminate these senseless and completely avoidable tragedies. Our lives will never be the same without Michael. We will partner with others to try and make sure other people don't have to experience that pain.

We will start by trying to change the culture that views these tragedies as accidents. If I fired a gun at a room full of people and killed someone – would it be considered an accident? If somebody gets behind a wheel of a car and hurdles that car down a high-traffic street at 130 miles per hour, the death that results isn't really an accident.

Technology is available today that would eliminate drunk driving. We will work with other partners, and hopefully see the day when this technology is implemented and tragedies like the one we are living through are eliminated.

Until then, we will do what we can to work with other organizations, law enforcement agencies, legislative bodies, and bar owners to try and affect positive change to reduce the drinking and driving that continues to plague our community and our country.

Thank you and God Bless,

Jim, Kelly and Jimmy Collins