



Photo by Gary McCarthy

With an iron fence destroyed in the crash in the foreground, a mourner pays tribute at the site of a Mother's Day crash in which a longtime South L.A. vendor who specialized in the holiday was killed.

Vendor killed in Mother's Day crash

From City News Service

SOUTH LOS ANGELES — A 21-year-old man was free on bail facing charges of gross vehicular manslaughter after he reportedly fell asleep at the wheel after working a night shift and inadvertently crashed his car into a flower stand, killing a woman selling Mother's Day flowers and a man waiting for a bus Sunday.

Harley Darnell Daniels told officers at the scene he nodded off at the wheel after working all night at a soft drink bottling plant, according to a police captain. Tests that should show whether he was under the influence of an illegal drug were pending, police said.

Marilyn Herod, a 57-year-old Riverside grandmother, and Selvin Herrera, a 26-year-old immigrant from Guatemala, were killed in the 7 a.m. crash.

Daniels' 2006 Dodge Charger was westbound on Century Boulevard when it slammed into

a wrought-iron fence at Vermont Avenue, where Herod had set up her stand, according to Los Angeles police Capt. Bill Sutton of the South Traffic Division.

For the past seven years, Herod had set up the flower stand with other mothers to sell gift baskets and teddy bears in a parking lot near St. Reed Missionary Baptist Church, which she and the other women attended.

"One of the bars from the iron fence struck her in the head," Los Angeles police Officer J. Covarrubias told the Los Angeles Times.

Herrera was waiting on a bus when he was fatally injured in the crash, which also injured two other women and another man.

A 69-year-old woman who was helping Herod set up the floral stand was in critical but stable condition with internal injuries, The Times reported.

A 41-year-old woman who may have been buying a gift basket had her right foot severed

in the crash. She was in stable condition at California Hospital Medical Center.

Rodolfo Rumines, 20, who was also waiting at the bus stop, had back pain and cuts to his forehead, according to the newspaper.

Daniels was said by his attorney to be highly distraught over the accident. He lives near the crash scene and had reportedly bought flowers from Herod in the past, according to reports.

Flowers, baskets and teddy bears lay strewn about the sidewalk amid what Sutton described as "a horrific scene."

The car barreled over the sidewalk and plowed into the people before coming to rest atop a mangled iron fence and remnants of the street-corner flower stand.

Some members of the victims' churches ran to the scene, a busy intersection crowded on Sunday mornings with people walking to several churches.