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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: August 2, 2013 **Contact:** Jonathan Raven, Chief Deputy District Attorney
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Judge Sentences Sacramento Man Convicted of Murder for DUI
Ryan Baird had two prior DUI convictions

(Woodland, CA) – August 2, 2013 - District Attorney Jeff Reisig announced that on August 2, 2013, Yolo County Superior Court Judge Janet Gaard sentenced defendant Ryan Baird to 23 years to life in state prison for Second Degree Murder, with great bodily injury enhancements to two other victims; Gross Vehicular Manslaughter while under the influence, with two prior driving under the influence convictions; and, Driving Under the Influence/Over a 0.08 BAC causing injury. On May 14, 2013, a Yolo County Jury convicted the defendant of the charges leading to the life sentence.

On January 6, 2012, Baird and the three friends were attending a barbeque at victim James Black's house to celebrate his 21st birthday. All four of the young men had been drinking and got into the Baird's 2001 Mitsubishi Eclipse. Baird was the driver and entered I-5 at Main Street in Woodland and exited at County Road 102 where it was calculated that he was traveling between 79 to 94 miles per hour before locking his brakes and launching his car off the side of the road, rolling the car numerous times. All three victims were ejected from the car and Baird had to be cut out of the driver's seat. Robert Sunderland III died at the scene. James Black was in a coma for multiple weeks and suffered from a severe traumatic brain injury as well as multiple fractures to his pelvis and legs. Oscar Saeed Rodriguez suffered from a broken arm which required surgery and a fractured back.

This was Baird's third driving under the influence charge and second motor vehicle collision that he caused as a result of driving under the influence. A breath test at the scene of the crash registered a blood alcohol level of .144 and a blood test done shortly thereafter registered a blood alcohol level of .18, as well as the presence of marijuana. Baird had been warned and acknowledged the fact that driving under the influence was dangerous to human life when he pled no contest in each of his two prior convictions. In addition, Baird had been subject to an alcohol education classes and the study guide from those classes was retrieved from the wreckage of his car, along with a hand written statement within the study guide written prior to this crash expressing the fact that he knew that driving under the influence is dangerous to human life and could cause death.

In sentencing Baird to a life term, Judge Janet Gaard stated that this was a tragedy to many victims and their families. Deputy District Attorney Amanda Zambor stated that

“Overall this is a just result. The Defendant risked the lives of the three people in his vehicle, as well as the lives of everyone else on the road, when he chose to drive on January 6, 2012. He had numerous warnings and education on just how dangerous driving under the influence is and chose to get in the car regardless of the risks. Unfortunately the victims in this case, Robert “Bobby” Sunderland III, James Black, Oscar Rodriguez, and their families are the ones who have to pay the price for the defendant’s decision to drive under the influence.”

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