



# BUTTE COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY



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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Chico Man Admits to Vehicular Manslaughter of Local Doctor**

A Chico man appeared through his attorney in Butte County Superior Court today where a plea of no contest was entered to vehicular manslaughter. Jim Rae Voyles, 90, by the plea, admitted hitting and killing a local well-known doctor with his truck in July of 2018.

District Attorney Mike Ramsey stated the case began on July 28, 2018, when Voyles was driving at 35-40 miles per hour on Cohasset Road north of Sigler Lane. The victim, local doctor and avid bicyclist Dr. William Patrick Doherty, 75, was enjoying a Saturday morning bike ride when Voyles approached from behind and attempted to pass on the doctor's left.

However, Voyles failed to move his large Ford F-250 truck over to allow enough space for the doctor. Voyles struck the doctor causing him to be thrown from his bicycle onto the roadway. Doctor Doherty was alive when emergency personnel arrived on scene and was transported via ambulance to Enloe Hospital to receive emergency treatment for multiple life-threatening injuries, including spinal fractures, ribs fractures, a pulmonary contusion, and an arterial hematoma. Tragically, Dr. Doherty succumbed to his injuries the next day.

During the course of the investigation into this case, the District Attorney's Office became aware this was not the first collision caused by Voyles on Cohasset Road. It was discovered that Voyles had been driving on Cohasset Road in May of 2015 when he attempted to pass another bicyclist. Voyles failed to leave enough space and hit the bicyclist as he passed. Luckily that bicyclist only suffered minor injuries.

The judge scheduled Voyles' sentencing for November 2, 2021. Ramsey said Voyles faces up to one year in jail.

Ramsey said all motorists must share the road with any bicyclists and pedestrians and only pass when it is safe to do so. As evidenced by this case, failure to comply with vehicle safety laws can be a matter of life and death.