

SANTA BARBARA NEWS-PRESS

Arrest made in death of psychiatrist

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A neighbor of prominent psychiatrist Ronald Shlensky was arrested late Thursday on suspicion of vehicular manslaughter and felony hit-and-run in connection with his death last week, authorities said Friday.

Heather Lea Hulsey, 20, was taken into custody about 7 p.m. at her Montecito home on Knapp Drive, the private circular street where a week earlier the psychiatrist was struck while walking his dog, said California Highway Patrol Officer Donald Clotworthy.

Dr. Shlensky, 71, died the next day as a result of his injuries.

Authorities said Ms. Hulsey apparently was reaching for her cell phone, which had dropped to the floor of her Toyota 4Runner, when the vehicle struck Dr. Shlensky. A neighbor later found the dog wandering around. It was not injured.

Ms. Hulsey was released from County Jail on Friday afternoon after \$50,000 bail was posted. The investigation is continuing, and an arraignment date has not been set.

Ms. Hulsey, who lives with her parents in the gated community, could not be reached for comment on Friday.

Evely Laser Shlensky, Dr. Shlensky's wife of 44 years, expressed surprise at the arrest.

"It's shocking it was someone literally so close to home," she said.

Mrs. Shlensky said the Hulseys moved to the neighborhood about a month ago, adding that her husband met Ms. Hulsey's father for the first time on the day he was hit.

A News-Press report on the incident and Dr. Shlensky's life earlier this week prompted a tipster to report information that led to the arrest, the CHP said Friday.

"He had read the article about the collision in Thursday's edition of the Santa Barbara News-Press and recalled a conversation he had with Ms. Hulsey's boyfriend regarding a collision Ms. Hulsey had been in on Thursday, July 27," said Officer Clotworthy.

Mrs. Shlensky said she appreciates the tipster's help.

"The community can come together in numerous ways -- through the media, the police and whoever provided the information," she said. "This person wanted to do the right thing, for which I am very

grateful."

Dr. Shlensky, founder of the American Journal of Forensic Psychiatry, was struck in the 700 block of Knapp Drive around 6 p.m. July 27 while he and his yellow Labrador, named Suerte, walked along the road.

Authorities said Ms. Hulsey was headed out to her job at the Montecito Country Club pool when the collision occurred.

"As Ms. Hulsey was trying to retrieve her cell phone, the Toyota drifted to the left and struck Dr. Shlensky," Officer Clotworthy said.

The father of three and grandfather of four was taken to Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital, where he died the next morning. His son, Lincoln, 42, arrived at the hospital from Canada 15 minutes after his father died. Dr. Shlensky's wife showed up about an hour later from Chicago.

Their other children are Sheba Lux, 41, of Montecito, and Aziza Goldfarb, 38, of Chevy Chase, Md.

Dr. and Mrs. Shlensky had been in the Midwest visiting family when Dr. Shlensky decided that a week in the "pet inn" was enough for his 7-month-old puppy and returned two days early. Mrs. Shlensky was still in Chicago when she received word of the incident.

Ms. Hulsey's car was transported to CHP headquarters on Friday afternoon. Crime technicians will examine the vehicle this weekend or Monday.

CHP officers said they are investigating further and conducting interviews to determine why the suspect left the scene.

"We're confident we have the right person and the right vehicle," Officer Clotworthy said. "Now, we need to determine the other circumstances and the intent at the time. There's still a lot of work that needs to be done."

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