**DWI Memorial Sign Programs**

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The Carrillo brothers’ memorial sign was erected in 2003 and replaced with a new version in 2006. The original sign was kept by the Eddy County DWI Program and then donated to the National Museum of American History. Photo by Harold Dorwin.

**The New Mexico DWI Memorial Sign Program is one of the oldest programs of its type in the nation. How did it begin?**

In 1998, the New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT) established an alcohol-related crash victim memorial sign program that publicly memorializes DWI (driving while intoxicated) victims. The program applies only to the installation of signs alongside state highways and is only for persons killed by drunk drivers. Deceased drunk drivers are not eligible.

There are DWI Programs in all 33 counties in New Mexico. Upon a request by the family or friends of a DWI crash victim, the Eddy County DWI Program submits applications for DWI Memorial Signs to NMDOT for review. Should all of the criteria be met and the application approved the Eddy County DWI Program purchases, manages, and maintains the DWI Memorial Signs in Eddy County. These signs are installed by employees of the NMDOT Carlsbad and Artesia Patrol Yards.
The signs that your agency donated to the National Museum of American History are compelling reminders of the unfair risks posed by intoxicated drivers. What is special about the Eddy County DWI Memorial Sign Program?

To increase the effectiveness of the signs, the Eddy County DWI Program requested and received permission to place a picture of the victim on each sign. The sign program was created to get attention and help people relate to the message. We have found that to put a face with a name personalizes the message and delivers a greater impact on the motoring public. The signs serve as stark reminders of the high cost of DWI and reinforce the message that anyone can be the victim of an impaired driver.

When the DWI Memorial Signs become weathered and faded by the sun, or need replacing for any reason, new signs are purchased. The replaced signs are first offered to family or friends of the victim. They are not discarded or destroyed by the Eddy County DWI Program out of respect for the deceased.

**BAT** is an acronym for Breath Alcohol Tester, and a vehicle equipped with this capability is called a BATmobile. The phrase, “The BAT is out” was used in a public information campaign, and the red checkmark is for DWI Checkpoints. The BAT campaign is a New Mexico Department of Transportation initiative started in 1993 and still in use today. Photo by Harold Dorwin.
Who is memorialized on the sign donated to NMAH?

Isaiah Carrillo and Freddy Carrillo, ages 14 and 12 at the time of their deaths, are the youngest victims represented on the Faces of DWI Memorial Signs in Eddy County. In the early morning hours of February 16, 2003 the brothers along with three other youngsters ages 13 to 15 were passengers in a vehicle driven by 18-year-old Jonathan V. Garcia. The Garcia vehicle was traveling westbound on County Road 646 and was moving too fast to stop at a stop sign because of driver impairment. It skidded through the intersection and struck a tree. All occupants of the vehicle were injured. Isaiah and Freddy Carrillo were transported to a Lubbock, Texas hospital where they died of head injuries. Garcia was arrested and charged with two counts of vehicular homicide, an accident resulting in great bodily injury, child abuse, minor in possession of alcohol, open container, no insurance, and driver to be licensed. He served prison time and has been released.
How did other signs help to curb DWI incidents?

For many years, New Mexico led the nation in alcohol-related crash fatalities. Using a variety of media in an attempt to change this sad statistic, signs also were placed along state highways warning motorists of DWI Sobriety Checkpoints and urging them not to drink and drive. These roadside signs became a common sight by the 1990s.

A vehicle hit by an impaired driver, resulting in the death of the passenger and unborn twins, was donated to the Eddy County DWI Program for use in public places. It is a reminder of the high price of DWI, a drunk driver’s legacy, and lives cut short. Photo by Debbie Luginbyhl.