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**NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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Commonwealth v. Robert Stewart Thompson

Man with Lengthy DUI History Sentenced to 6 Years for DUI Crash with Severe Injuries

Virginia Beach, Va. – Colin D. Stolle, Commonwealth's Attorney for the city of Virginia Beach, announced that Robert Stewart Thompson, age 73, formerly of the 7900 block of Redmon Road in Norfolk, Virginia, was sentenced today by Circuit Court Judge Les L. Lilley for charges of DUI – Reckless – Victim Permanently Impaired (2 counts) and DUI. Judge Lilley sentenced Thompson to ten (10) years and 365 days in prison with five (5) years suspended, leaving six (6) years to serve. The sentence nearly doubled the high-end of the Virginia State Sentencing Guidelines, which recommended he serve no more than three (3) years and four (4) months in prison. He was placed on good behavior for ten (10) years upon his release and he may not drive at all during that good behavior period. He must also pay a fine of \$2,500.

Thompson pled guilty to the charges on December 9, 2020. Had this matter gone to trial, the Commonwealth's evidence would have proven that on February 7, 2020, an officer with the Virginia Beach Police Department was running radar on Shell Road looking at Northampton Boulevard in Virginia Beach. He observed a Subaru driven by Robert Thompson traveling 70 m.p.h. in a 55 m.p.h. zone. The officer put on his blue emergency lights and caught up to Thompson's vehicle, but Thompson did not stop. Instead, he drove for about one mile while the officer utilized his siren. Thompson still did not stop. He continued into the intersection of Northampton Boulevard and Pleasure House Drive. Traveling at a speed of approximately 50 m.p.h., Thompson struck a car that was stopped at a red light and occupied by a husband and wife. He made no attempt to brake.

The victims' vehicle was sandwiched between Thompson's vehicle and a truck behind which they were stopped. Police were on scene immediately due to the officer who initially observed Thompson speeding. Thompson had a strong odor of alcohol and slurred speech. He was transported to the hospital where his blood was drawn and later sent to the Department of Forensic

Science for testing. His Blood Alcohol Content was later determined to be 0.21 which is over two and a half times the legal limit.

The victims sustained serious injuries in the crash. Both victims suffered multiple broken bones which required metal rods to repair. The female front seat passenger suffered a life-threatening condition that could have killed her but for the swift arrival of emergency services and the intervention of trauma doctors at the hospital's Intensive Care Unit.

Thompson's lengthy criminal record dates to 1990. He has prior convictions for DUI 1st Offense – 2 counts, Possess Schedule I or II Drug, Eluding Police (misdemeanor) – 2 counts, Eluding Police (felony) – 2 counts, Drive on Revoked/Suspended License, DUI - 2nd Offense within 5 years, Assault of a Law Enforcement Officer (felony), DUI-Refusal of Test, and multiple probation violations.

Assistant Commonwealth's Attorneys Jason M. Kowalski and Eleanor J. Gaines prosecuted this case. Please contact Macie Allen if additional information is desired.

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