

Local Attorney Abdullah Partners With Xavier To Stop Drunk Driving

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NEW ORLEANS – Veteran Orleans and Jefferson Parish prosecutor, David Abdullah, and Xavier University of Louisiana have entered into a formal partnership, whose mission is to prevent driving under the influence (DUI) among college students in the Greater New Orleans region.

Abdullah, now in private practice as a partner at New Orleans-based law firm Peiffer, Rosca, Wolf, Abdullah, Carr & Kane, APLC, possesses 15 years of experience prosecuting and defending DWI offenders. Xavier University, listed as one of the nation's top colleges in the 2016 Princeton Review, has a longstanding commitment to making students aware of the risks posed by driving under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

"I have seen countless lives and futures destroyed by drunk driving, and the common denominator is always the same – a bad decision," Abdullah said. "Checkpoints and other law enforcement measures deal with the problem downstream. Xavier University and I want to go upstream, to positively impact the decision-making process of college students. Drinking and driving is a choice – the wrong choice. We want college students to make the right choice."

Abdullah will be speaking to Xavier students in early February during a campus-wide program about Mardi Gras safety. In addition to programming from Xavier's campus police, the university also requires all students to learn about personal safety and the hazards of DUI during freshman orientation.

The NOPD made 1,538 DWI arrests in 2014, and the rate of drunk driving is highest among 21-25-year-olds (21.9 percent), according to a 2012 survey from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

"It's important to remember that college students are adults, not children," said Deon Ridgell, Assistant Dean of Student Life at Xavier University. "Lecturing students doesn't work, and threat-based language sets the wrong tone. We don't want to tell students what to do. Rather, we want to help guide them to make the right decisions on their own."

"It's easier and easier to make the right choices, particularly with services like Uber operating here in Orleans Parish,"

he said. "A recent study conducted in a partnership between Uber and Mothers Against Drunk Driving showed a meaningful decrease in alcohol-related crashes among drivers under 30 following the launch of UberX ridesharing in particular markets. The message here is unmistakable: When young people are made aware of what the right choices are, more often than not, they'll make the right choices."

Data continues to show how prevalent alcohol consumption and driving is among college-aged youth. More than 1,300 college students are killed each year around the country in alcohol-related traffic accidents.

And, according to a recent study, 25 percent of U.S. college students reported drinking and driving in the last month.

"People often forget that New Orleans is a college town, and New Orleans can be a lot for a young person to handle," Abdullah said. "But developing strong decision-making skills and good habits starts when you're young. This is why we're going upstream to prevent DWI incidents, before they become downstream felony incidents or fatalities."

Peiffer, Rosca, Wolf, Abdullah, Carr & Kane, APLC law firm, with offices in New Orleans, Cleveland, San Francisco and New York state, is a nationwide litigation law firm that represents individuals and entities who have been the victims of negligence, fraud or the misconduct of powerful interests. Founded in 2013, the firm's vision is to provide first-class legal representation to clients who seek to recover for injuries suffered at the hands of others. The firm also defends clients who have been charged with such crimes as DWIs, drug offenses, property crimes, and select violent offenses.

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