

## **Fatal car accident raises concern over highway overpass safety**

A Champaign woman was killed in a car accident on the I-74 when a large rock crashed through the front windshield of her car at about 8 a.m. this morning, according to the Champaign Police Department. She is the second person to be killed in a similar accident in nearly a year.

Police received reports of young males throwing debris from the Prospect Avenue overpass onto the I-74 just before the accident.

Emily Sawyer, 43, was driving her mother, Celine Taylor, 86, to Holy Family Catholic Church in St. Joseph at the time of the accident. The rock split Sawyer's head open and caused the car to crash into a guard railing.

Sawyer was taken to Carle Foundation Hospital and pronounced dead on arrival. Taylor was "disoriented" and was treated at Carle for a broken arm and multiple bruises, police said.

The rock found at the incident was the size of a football and weighed about 10 pounds.

Last year, prominent Urbana lawyer Samuel T. Howe was killed when a can of gasoline was dropped from an overpass on Windsor Road onto I-57, where he had been driving.

Sawyer's relatives said in a news conference at the hospital that fences should be erected on overpasses throughout the area.

Sawyer was a breast cancer survivor and a mother of three young children. She also worked as an administrative aide at Champaign Unit 4 schools.

Sawyer's two sisters, Felicity Shrove and Donna Taylor, issued a statement at the hospital.

"This was a senseless tragedy," the statement read. "It could have been any one of us or any of our kids. We hope that steps can be taken to prevent this from happening to anyone else."

Champaign County Crimestoppers is accepting information about the accident at (217) 373-TIPS.