

Prominent El Pasoan killed in car crash

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El Paso Times

Former El Pasoan and Sun Queen Mary Hardie Hoover Smith died Saturday in a Birmingham, Ala., hospital from injuries sustained in a head-on collision with a tractor trailer. The incident occurred Wednesday evening, while she and her son, Reed Smith, were returning from a college interview.

Reed, who was a high school senior, had been driving at the time. He died at the scene.

Mary Smith's mother, El Paso Hall of Famer and golfer Mary Hoover, said it was clear what happened. Witnesses alleged that Reed Smith, 18, fell asleep at the wheel, crossed the median, and drove into an on-coming wheel tractor trailer.

An investigation by Alabama police into the cause of the accident is continuing.

Mary Smith, who had lived in Austin for about the past five years, was a well-known El Paso native and athlete. While a Coronado High School freshman, she and her tennis partner won the school's first-ever trophy. Nearly 20-years ago, her family donated Hoover House to the University of Texas at El Paso. For the past two decades, this has been where UTEP's presidents have lived.

"What's happened is very tragic," said El Paso lawyer Richard Feuille, who knew Smith's family. "Molly was a lovely person, and everyone liked her."

Mary Smith is survived by two sons, Renick Smith and Bradford Smith, both of Austin; her parents, Joe and Mary Hoover of El Paso; her brother, Joseph Hoover of El Paso; and many nieces and nephews. Reed Smith is also survived by his father, Max Smith.

Services will be held Friday in St. Matthew's Episcopal Church in Austin. Service time is pending.