

# Hopkins student Nathan Krasnopoler remembered at candlelight vigil one year after bike accident

**More than 100 gather to honor former Hopkins student; family now supporting legislation to require competency testing for Maryland drivers, stiffer penalties for failure to summon aid**



(Dustin McKibben )  
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Johns Hopkins University student Nathan Krasnopoler was riding his bike home from the Waverly Farmer's Market on a sunny Saturday morning last February when his life was cut short by an elderly driver.

The 20-year-old computer science major from Ellicott City was riding in a marked bike lane on University Parkway when an 83-year-old woman turned right and hit him, trapping him under her car for 15 to 20 minutes. He never regained consciousness, was in a coma for more than five months and died Aug. 10 of brain injuries sustained in the accident.

One year after the collision, Krasnopoler's family is working to make sure that others don't suffer the same fate he did.

On Sunday, they joined with more than 100 Hopkins students, bicyclists and others to hold a candlelight vigil at the site of the accident. They also are supporting legislation before Maryland's General Assembly that would require competency testing for Maryland drivers; award eight points to drivers who fail to summon assistance in an accident involving injury or death; and modify the Health Care Decision Act to permit surrogates to make decisions regarding living organ donations.

They also have prepared a printed summary about their efforts to prevent similar accidents, entitled "Safer Maryland Roads," and they maintain a Facebook page for Nathan under his name.

The family held the vigil because "as far as we're concerned, he left our family today," said Susan Cohen, Nathan's mother.

Placing chrysanthemums and hydrangeas on a white "ghost bike" at the site of the accident, Cohen said she was grateful for the support shown by Nathan's classmates, university administrators and others in the year since the accident.

"It's wonderful how much the community has supported our family — the university especially," she said. Nathan "was a happy kid and very smart. He shouldn't have lost his life this way. ... We're very hopeful that something positive will come out of this to make the roads safer."

As a result of the accident on Feb. 26, "he stopped being our son that day," agreed Nathan's father, Mitchell Krasnopoler.

"Nathan's accident happened in an instant one year ago today," he said at the vigil. "We are comforted by the support of his friends and family and the wider Baltimore, Hopkins and bicycling communities. ... We want to prevent another family from going through a tragedy anything like ours."

In addition to the pending legislation, the Johns Hopkins University has been taking steps to prevent car accidents involving bikers and pedestrians, according to spokesman Dennis O'Shea.

Last summer, he said, the university paid for an engineering study of the intersections of 33rd Street with St. Paul and Charles streets, where a number of accidents have occurred, and also a broader safety study of other key streets and intersections near the Homewood campus, by faculty members at Hopkins' Bloomberg School of Public Health.

Finally, a two-year reconstruction of a several block stretch of Charles Street north of 29th Street is expected to get under way in April and will result in safety improvements for pedestrians and bikers, O'Shea said. The university has contributed \$2.5 million toward that \$25 million project, he added.