

A LOST TREASURE



TRAGIC: A junior-high valedictorian died when she was thrown from this flipped Chevy Camaro on the Belt Parkway.

N.Y. Post: G.N. Miller

Family mourns girl killed in parkway horror

By DAVID ANDREATTA and LAURA ITALIANO

Loved ones grieved for a beautiful 14-year-old girl yesterday, as a Queens teen was charged with reckless driving for flipping his Camaro in the horrific high-speed crash that took her life.

"What can I tell you? She was my Becky," the victim's shaken grandfather, Howie, said as a steady stream of relatives and friends paid anguished calls to the family's home in Howard Beach, Queens.

Rebecca Latwaitis — described as gorgeous, smart and outgoing — had been sitting in the back seat of the 2002

Camaro as it allegedly sped west on the Belt Parkway near Knapp Street around 8 p.m. Sunday night.

At the wheel — and allegedly flooring the pedal — was Ilir Reci, 18, of Rockaway. Rebecca had met him the previous year, her first at Beach Channel High School.

When Reci — who is scheduled to start his senior year next week — lost control, the Camaro turned over and landed in the oncoming lanes. Rebecca was thrown from the car, and struck by an oncoming Lexus.

The girl — who was valedictorian of her junior high school — was



BECKY LATWAITIS
"She had no fear."

pronounced dead at Coney Island Hospital three hours later.

Reci was not hurt. A second passenger — an unidentified 17-year-old

— suffered a cut on his right hand.

Rebecca's parents didn't even know she was out with Reci, friends said.

Instead, they came home from a Labor Day party at Hamilton Beach, and found their daughter wasn't home. Then, three detectives came to their door.

"They never got to say goodbye," family friend Kenny Brown said of the girl's hysterical parents. "You never think it could happen so close to home."

Rebecca's family was described as tight-knit and devoutly Lutheran. The girl herself was remarkable for her straight-A grades, her blond-haired, blue-eyed beauty,

and her contagious laugh, family members and friends said.

"She was modelesque," said cousin Lisa Hussey, recalling how, as a younger child, Rebecca would put on plays and skits, and dance around the room.

"Becky always made you laugh. She had no fear."

All was quiet yesterday outside Reci's waterfront apartment on Beach Channel Drive, a building where his father, Sebadjian, is the super.

"He's young," was all one self-described friend, a young woman, would say when approached by reporters. "Accidents happen."