

Hanson lawyer seeks venue change for trial

Written By PAULA BROWN

Michelle Hanson, the mother charged in the death of her three-year-old son Kaden Young, and her lawyer, Marco Forte, plan to request a change of venue for her upcoming criminal trial.

Ms. Hanson appeared in court in Orangeville on Monday (Dec. 16), and was remanded to appear on Feb. 11 for the motion seeking a change of venue. Mr. Forte, who has been representing Ms. Hanson, did not appear alongside her in court.

If the request for a change of venue is accepted it would see Ms. Hanson tried outside Orangeville. Mr. Forte has hinted, on several occasions, that Ms. Hanson would likely not receive a fair trial in Orangeville.

A preliminary inquiry was held in July to determine if there was enough evidence for Ms. Hanson to be tried on charges of impaired driving causing death and criminal negligence causing death. Ontario Court Justice Richard Humphrey ruled on July 30, following eight days of preliminary inquiry and discovery, that Ms. Hanson would face trial for the two charges.

Mr. Forte spoke with the Citizen following the ruling about whether he would request the trial be held in a different location, saying he planned to take a closer look at the impact of both social media and mainstream media coverage.

'I'm aware of a lot of the social media coverage and different Facebook groups and social media groups that have sprung up as a result of this case and the localized nature of some of those groups,' said Mr. Forte.

Despite the motion for a change of venue, which will take place in February, assistant Crown attorney Danielle Garbaty said a pre-trial hearing would still be held in Orangeville.

In the early morning hours of Feb. 21, 2018, Ms. Hanson failed to stop at a road-closed sign at the 10th Line of Amaranth, driving onto the flooded road. The minivan she was driving was pulled into the Grand River. She and Kaden, who was in the vehicle with his mother, both managed to escape, but Kaden was pulled from his mother's arms, plunging into the icy depths of the raging river. Kaden's body was found under a bridge in Belwood Lake by two fisherman on April 21, two months to the day that he went missing. Ms. Hanson was arrested on October 11, 2018.

According to the indictment that the Citizen has obtained from the courts, Ms. Hanson must be tried by Oct. 13, 2020 as part of her right to be tried within a reasonable time frame. She will make her next court appearance on Feb. 11.