

H-R OCTOBER 14, 1982

# Boy, 7, killed in crosswalk; brother 'critical'

Justin Capers, 7, a second-grade student at Fairview Elementary School, was killed Monday afternoon when he and his brother were struck by a car as they were crossing Sixth Ave. in a school crosswalk.

His triplet brother, Andrew M. Capers, was listed in critical condition at University Hospitals in Iowa City, suffering from multiple injuries.

The driver of the westbound car, 84-year-old Roy Strasser of 1828 Eighth Ave., Grinnell, was charged with failure to stop at a school crossing.

Grinnell Police Chief Bill Peters said the fatality occurred at approximately 3:15 p.m. as the boys were crossing Sixth Ave. at Summer St. shortly after school had ended for the day.

According to Clement Bodensteiner, superintendent of the Grinnell-Newburg schools, crossing guard Vivian See had begun leading the brothers across the street when she noticed the oncoming car, realized that it was not going to stop, and jumped back. But the Capers boys continued into the path of the vehicle.

Justin Capers, son of Fred and Susan Capers of 809 High St., was dead on arrival at Grinnell General Hospital. The boys' triplet sister, Celeste, reportedly was at an after-school function and was not with her brothers at the time of the accident.

Bodensteiner said the crossing guard was leading the boys across the street and had crossed as far as the left west-bound lane.

"She realized that the car wasn't stopping, and at that time it was just too late," Bodensteiner said. "Apparently he [Strasser] didn't even see them. Some of us went over to his home later in the evening and tried to comfort him. I don't think he realized that he had hit a couple of kids."

Ironically, the fatality occurred only two weeks after Grinnell had received an award from the American Automobile Association for having gone two years without a pedestrian fatality.

Grinnell fireman Jerry Barns said his department's rescue unit had received another call just seconds before the accident. That first call involved a child reportedly

and two blocks south of the pedestrian accident. And, since that call had come in first, the rescue unit had no choice but to respond to it before going to the scene of the accident, he said.

Fireman Fred Grandstaff said, however, that the rescue unit was at the Fourth Ave. address only briefly, determined that the child who had swallowed the peach pit was not in danger, and returned to the accident scene "within a couple of minutes."

Avis Tone, Fairview principal, said students at the elementary school discussed the accident at length on Tuesday morning.

"Some were actually there when it happened," Tone said. "So we've let them talk it out. We think it's best that they get it out of their systems."

Tone added that the Summer St. crossing has been controversial for some time because it is still within the 30-mph speed limit on Sixth Ave. She called for the establishment of a lower speed limit and the installation of a school stop light.

"One of the teachers has even mentioned a pedestrian overpass," she added.

Because Sixth Ave. is a primary highway, any move to change the speed limit or upgrade traffic signals would have to be approved by the Iowa Department of Transportation.

Robert Humphrey, District 1 engineer for the DOT, said his office would consider "any suggestion that the city may have, either through its traffic-engineering people or the city council."

That, Humphrey said, would mean the city would have to write a formal request for changes, after which the DOT would conduct studies to determine whether conditions at the intersection warrant such moves.

Factors taken into consideration includes the volume of traffic and the number of pedestrians, Humphrey said.

Grinnell City Manager Ted Clausen said he anticipates some persons attending the next city council meeting to push for such action.

Justin Capers, 7, of 809 High St., Grinnell, died Monday afternoon of injuries received following an auto-pedestrian accident Oct. 11. Funeral services will be conducted at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at the Grinnell United Methodist Church. Burial will be at Hazelwood Cemetery. Friends may call at the Smith Funeral Home. A memorial has been established, and contributions may be left at the Grinnell State Bank. The son of Fred Wallis and Susan Kathleen Heffner Capers Jr., he was born May 13, 1975, at Princeton, N.J., one with his family to Grinnell in 976 and attended Grinnell schools. At the time of his death, he was a second-grade student at Fairview Elementary School. He was also a member of the Grinnell Swim Team and the Tiger Cubs. He had also per-



### Justin Capers services held

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Funeral services for Justin Capers, 7, of 809 High St., Grinnell, who died Monday afternoon in a car-pedestrian accident, were held at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at the Grinnell United Methodist Church. The Rev. Douglas P. Harding, associate pastor of the church, and Phil Arnold of

Grinnell officiated. Organist was Barbara Lien, and vocalist was Marvin Kelley. Pallbearers were Dave Abaar Jr., Jack Matthews, Scott Ross and Clarence Van Sant. Burial was at Hazelwood Cemetery, with the Smith Funeral Home in charge of arrangements.

Justin Capers rites Saturday 1982  
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