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**Construction Company Owner Sentenced to Jail for Death of
5-Year-Old Girl Struck by Pillars Following Wall Collapse**

*Defendant Built Dangerously Flawed Stone Fence in
Violation of Numerous Provisions of the NYC Building Code*

Brooklyn District Attorney Eric Gonzalez, together with New York City Department of Investigation Commissioner Jocelyn E. Strauber and New York City Department of Buildings Commissioner James Oddo, today announced that the owner of a Nassau County construction company has been sentenced to six months in jail and five years' probation following his conviction on criminally negligent homicide and other charges after a wall he built collapsed on a child, killing her.

District Attorney Gonzalez said, "This defendant's egregious failure to follow the most basic safety provisions of the New York City Building Code caused the horrific, brutal and completely avoidable death of little Alysson, leaving her devastated mother heartbroken. Today's sentence sends a message that there will be serious consequences for contractors whose sloppy work endangers the public. I commend the Department of Investigation, the Department of Buildings and my prosecutors for their diligent work on this case and commitment to pursuing justice."

Commissioner Strauber said, "Failure to comply with the City's building code can have tragic consequences. The defendant built a granite wall without following basic safety requirements, including the use of steel reinforcements, leading to the senseless death of five-year-old Alysson Pinto-Chaumana. Now he faces a prison sentence that underscores the importance of construction safety and our commitment to aggressively pursue those who ignore rules designed to protect the public. DOI thanks the Brooklyn District Attorney's Office and the City Department of Buildings for their commitment to provide a measure of justice in this devastating case."

The District Attorney identified the defendants as Nadeem Anwar, 48, of Valley Stream and his company, City Wide Construction and Renovations, Inc., also of Valley Stream. Anwar was sentenced today to six months in jail and five years' probation. City Wide was sentenced to a fine of \$5,000. The defendants were convicted by Brooklyn Supreme Court Justice Danny Chun of criminally negligent homicide, first-degree offering a false instrument for filing, and second-degree falsifying business records on May 14, 2024, following a bench trial.

The District Attorney said that, according to the investigation, on August 29, 2019, at approximately 8:30 p.m., Alysson Pinto-Chaumana, 5, was with her mother and several friends while they were visiting a friend at 444 Harman Street, a three-story building in Bushwick, Brooklyn.

The group was outside waiting near the front door on an enclosed patio next to a granite wall that fenced in the patio and had a base of heavy stone pillars topped with stone horizontal plates. Suddenly, the pillars and a horizontal plate fell inward onto Alysson, crushing her skull and causing her death.

An investigation into the collapse determined that the defendant, a licensed contractor, who was hired to renovate the façade of the property and build the wall in September 2018 committed numerous violations of the New York City Building Code. Although he was licensed as a contractor in Nassau County, he was not authorized to file for work permits with the NYC

Department of Buildings and had another contractor file the application for the work on the façade, but not for building the wall.

The defendant did not acquire a DOB permit to build a stone wall at 444 Harman Street, which was required, nor did he have a licensed engineer or architect conduct a post-construction analysis of the wall's stability as required. A row of stone pillars must have at least one pillar every 48 inches with a steel reinforcing bar anchoring that pillar to the base. All of the pillars must also be secured to the base with an engineer-grade adhesive. The horizontal plates must be secured to the pillars with engineer-grade adhesive.

A DOB engineer who responded to the collapse observed there were no steel reinforcing bars in any of the pillars. Furthermore, he determined that there was no engineer-grade adhesive securing any of the wall's component parts. Therefore, he determined, the wall was highly unstable and held together mostly by its own weight and gravity, an egregious violation of multiple provisions of the Building Code. The engineer described the conditions as "imminently perilous to life."

Following the tragic death of Alysson Pinto-Chaumana, and a similar incident that occurred 2021 in the Bronx where another child was killed by a falling stone balustrade railing, the Department of Buildings began conducting educational public outreach about the dangers associated with improper construction of these property fences. This outreach has included distributing flyer in neighborhoods where these types of railings and fences are common, and speaking at local community meetings about how cutting corners on construction projects can have fatal consequences.

The case was investigated by New York City Department of Buildings Director of Forensic Engineering Unit, Marco Frias, PE, and former New York City Department of Investigation Chief Investigator James McElligott, under the supervision of Senior Inspector General Gregory Cho, Deputy Commissioner/Chief of Investigations Dominic Zarrella.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant District Attorney Adam Libove, Deputy Chief of the District Attorney's Public Integrity Bureau, and Assistant District Attorney Pamela Murray, Deputy Chief of the District Attorney's Frauds Bureau, under the supervision of Assistant District Attorney Michel Spanakos, Deputy Chief of the District Attorney's Investigations Division, and the overall supervision of Assistant District Attorney Patricia McNeill, Chief of the Investigations Division.

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