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## DRINKING

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of my crash, the policemen didn't do me a favor. Let's hope the policemen and the court system did you a favor by sentencing you to listen to us tonight."

Before he spoke to the crowd, Durrant said it took him several years after his crash to completely stop drinking and to turn his experience into something positive for others.

"It was about four years after my crash before I stopped to realize thwasn't an unlucky thing happening to an unlucky guy," said Durrant, who is also in-

involved with MADD and has spoken to hundreds of thousands of people over the years. "It was a very obvious thing that was happening. I always thought my accident was an accident. But in actuality, it was a crash that was stupid. It didn't need to be."

Durrant said he tries to relate to the people at the panels by telling them that, even if they never hurt anyone but themselves, drinking and driving is not a victimless crime.

"I have a two-year-old son and I've never thrown him up in the air and caught him and watched him laugh," Durrant tells the crowd. "I'll never do that because of the choices I

made 16 years ago. I'll never stand behind him and teach him how to swing a bat. I'll never put up a basketball hoop and shot baskets with him.

"You drink and drive, you're going to have victims."

MADD's efforts, tougher laws and new approaches, such as the panel, are helping raise awareness and combat the problem, Danforth said. But there are still a lot of people getting DUIs. About 2,500 people were arrested last year for driving drunk.

The average age is between 20 and 24, Danforth said, in "the rite of passage years," as he calls them. But both he and Rice note a change in attitude.

"Everyone's really become aware," Rice said. "It's just not socially acceptable to drink and drive anymore."

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