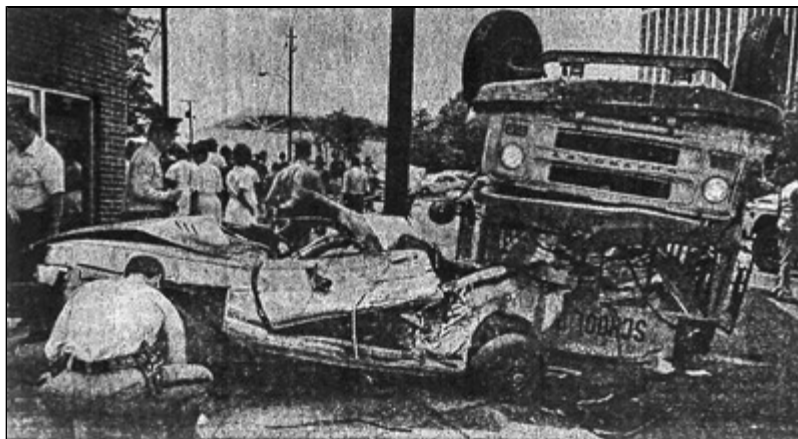


School Bus Versus Fire Truck, 1980

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One of the more unusual apparatus accidents in Raleigh occurred on May 12, 1980. About 2:30 p.m. at the intersection of Blount and East Lenoir streets, Wake County school bus #21 ran a red light and struck a small Toyota car. The bus turned over and crushed the vehicle. The 17-year-old driver died shortly after arriving at the hospital. The 32 students on the bus were slightly injured.



News & Observer photo

The *News & Observer* reported that all four of the county's EMS units responded, as well as three other rescue units. The students formed on a line on Blount Street, and were treated by EMS personnel as they waited to be transported. Ten were taken to Rex, and 22 went to Wake. All but one were treated and released.

The bus was traveling west on Lenoir Street, and the car was going south on Blount Street when the accident occurred. Brake failure was cited by the driver as a cause of the accident. They were tested and found functional. One witness said the bus began skidding just before entering the intersection. Witnesses also said that the driver may have been distracted by students who were taunting a group of transvestites.



Raleigh Times photo

Engine 3 was dispatched to the accident at 2:45 p.m. The 1973 Mack pumper arrived three minutes later. Personnel assisted with patient care and later washed away gasoline. By about 3:30 p.m., Wake County System Wrecker #54 was working to upright the bus. During that process,

the chain holding the bus to the wreck became unhooked. The bus rolled down an embankment and struck the side of Engine 3.

At 4:01 p.m., the engine marked in service from the accident, and out of service to the shop. They picked up a reserve pumper, and their damaged apparatus was sent to Central Mack the next day. Engine 3 operated the reserve engine-- old Engine 10, it appears, a 1968 American LaFrance-- until their 1973 Mack was returned to service on July 10, 1980.

Since January 1980, reported the *Raleigh Times*, eight earlier accidents involving Wake County school buses also resulted in injuries. Since the beginning of that year's school year, 150 students had been injured in bus accidents. The paper also noted that 45 bus accidents were reported in the first three months of that school year. Which was an average of two accidents for every three school days.

The victim who died was named Tracey Lea Calhoun. She was on her way to her part-time job at a Raleigh oil company. The North Carolina Petroleum Marketers Association established the Tracey Lea Calhoun Memorial Award in her honor. It's awarded annual to a safe-driving school bus driver.

I was on the bus that hit Tracey that afternoon,I was the only person on the seen that tried to help her, everyone one else was afraid the bus was going to explode, when the police and firemen arrived they had to pull me away from her car, because I refused to give up trying to help her.

Robert Norris ([Email](#)) - 03/31/12 - 08:47

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What are the FIRST TWO LETTERS of the word 'fire'?

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Small print: All html tags except and <i> will be removed from your comment. You can make links by just typing the url or mail-address.