

Driver of Mitchell Death Car Utters Safety Campaign Keynote

By CELESTINE SIBLEY

A sunburned prisoner at Bellwood Camp said the words which might well keynote the motor safety campaign which the State of Georgia launches Wednesday on the first anniversary of the death of Margaret Mitchell.

"I didn't mean to do it . . . it could have happened to anybody!" Hugh D. Gravitt is the prisoner and the man the law blames with the death, a year ago, of Georgia's greatly beloved Peggy Mitchell.

Standing inside the barred wall of the county convict camp, Gravitt stared out into space and repeated the words tonelessly.

"I wouldn't have done it for anything in the world. It could have happened to anybody. If everybody knew what I have been through . . . what happened a year ago has lost me everything I ever had. It don't matter to me now if I get out of here or when."

Gravitt, driver of the car which struck down the little writer at Peachtree and Thirteenth Streets, was sentenced last Nov. 20 to serve a year to 18 months in prison. He entered Bellwood Camp Nov. 23, and has been a model prisoner since, officials say.

"It hasn't been off my mind a minute, night or day, since it happened," Gravitt went on.

He goes over and over details of the accident in his mind even

during the day when he is laboring on public works projects, he said.

While Gravitt relives the details of his personal tragedy, Georgians generally Wednesday will honor the memory of one of the world's

foremost authors by observing Motor Vehicle Safety Day. Gov. Talmadge issued a proclamation calling for more rigid enforcement of traffic laws.

The State's traffic deaths for this year total 458.