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SI nursing student killed in hit-and-run, family says

By JESSICA SIMEONE and JOSE MARTINEZ

A Wagner College nursing student was biking home from the school's library when he was killed Sunday night by a hit-and-run driver, his family said today.

Ronald "RJ" Tillman had just finished studying for a test and was headed back to his apartment when he got slammed by an SUV near the Staten Island campus and his home.

"We just can't believe somebody would do that," said his aunt, Joan Snihur. "His mother is just heartbroken that he was there by himself, that nobody even stopped."

Cops said Tillman was riding in the opposite direction of Howard Avenue traffic when he was hit by the SUV. His aunt said Tillman was a cautious cyclist who enjoyed biking around the city.

"We would hope the police will be able to find out who did this and find out why," Snihur said. "How can you do something like that?"

Tillman, 29, had last year enrolled in Wagner's nursing program after previously graduating from Brooklyn College with a degree in film production.

"He was so happy to be in the program and meeting new people," his aunt said. "He was home for Christmas and just telling us all his stories. He loved New York."

Wagner students received an email notifying them of the death and offering them grief counseling.

Tillman, who had one sister and three half-siblings, loved running, biking and lacrosse his aunt said.

"He was a great kid, he had a great sense of humor," Snihur said. "It's just unbelievable that this happened. We're all still in shock."

The NYPD is looking to speak with anyone who has information on the hit-and-run driver. Tips can be phoned in to Crime Stoppers at (800) 577-TIPS (8477) or texted to CRIMES (274637) before entering TIP577.