

## Speaking out

If Indiana gets a tougher seat-belt law this year, it'll be because of Hoosiers like **Darcy Keith**.

The 35-year-old Fishers woman survived a fatal car crash in September 1991. She took time away from her job with State Auto Insurance on Tuesday to tell members of an Indiana Senate committee that she believes state law should require people to wear seat belts in sport utility vehicles, pickups and the back seats of their cars.

Keith, originally from Rushville, was not wearing a seat belt when she suffered a traumatic brain injury that put her in a coma for six days while she was a senior at Ball State University. She was traveling with four sorority sisters, two of whom were with her in the back seat and died.

Those in the front seat who were fastened in walked away with minor injuries.

Keith overcame paralysis, learning all over again how to bathe, dress and feed herself.

She went back to Ball State for a year and a half to retake courses in her major, graduating in May 1993. Today, you wouldn't guess she came so near death.

"The only way my sister could identify me was by this pinky ring," she said, holding up her finger while she testified in the Senate chamber. "By God's grace, I've made a remarkable recovery."

■ Compiled by Mary Beth Schneider, Michele McNeil, Kevin Corcoran and Theodore Kim.