

ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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NEWS RELEASE

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MAYS LANDING – A Ventnor man was sentenced to five years in prison Friday for an assault that ended in the April 2008 death of his friend and roommate, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel announced.

Joseph Becker, 25, entered a guilty plea in January to second-degree manslaughter in connection with the death of 62-year-old Dennis Friedrich. Becker must serve 85 percent of the prison term before parole eligibility. He already has 320 days of jail credit received for time served. Upon his release from State prison, Becker will be subject to three years of parole supervision, Assistant Prosecutor Lynn Heyer, who handled the State's case, said.

Prior to imposing sentence Superior Court Judge Bernard E. DeLury heard from the victim's wife, Donna C. Boyle and Friedrich's stepdaughter Karyn Edwards, both of whom described their loved one as a gentle, kind man.

"I was married to a wonderful man whom I loved very much. Now I am a widow," Boyle said in a statement read by Heyer.

A photo of the couple placed on the prosecution table for the judge to view.

Karyn Edwards' voice cracked as she spoke of her stepfather. She described him as an amazing man, a great father and a wonderful grandfather. Edwards said she feels sorry for her mother who must go on without her husband. She also feels a loss for Friedrich's grandchildren who still ask for their "Pop-Pop".

Becker also addressed the court. The defendant apologized to the victim's family.

"Dennis meant a lot to me," Becker said. "I cared about him as a friend and I really loved him a lot."

Judge DeLury said that he must sentence the defendant in accordance with the law and no prison term could ever restore the victim's family.

On April 5, 2008 Becker and Friedrich got into an argument at a residence where they both had lived at 4 North Oakland Avenue in Ventnor. Becker punched Friedrich on the right side of his neck because the victim attempted to intervene in a fight the defendant was having with his girlfriend. Police responded at 8:10 p.m. for a report of an assault. The victim was transported to the hospital where he was pronounced dead at 12:19 a.m. The following day Atlantic County Medical Examiner Dr. Hydow Park performed an autopsy. Park determined Friedrich died of blunt force trauma. The defendant was charged and indicted four months later.

Anyone with information involving serious crimes is asked to call the Atlantic County Prosecutor's Office at 609-909-7800 or go to the Prosecutor's Office Web site at <http://www.acpo.org/tips.html> and provide information by filling out the form anonymously on the Submit a Tip page. People can also call Crime Stoppers at 609-652-1234 or 1-800-658-8477 (TIPS). Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards for information leading to the arrest and indictment of those who commit crimes in Atlantic County.