

ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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NEWS RELEASE

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MAYS LANDING – A Ventnor man charged with manslaughter in connection with an assault that ended in the April 2008 death of another Ventnor man pled guilty to the crime, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel announced Thursday.

Joseph Becker, 25, entered his plea to second-degree manslaughter late Wednesday for causing the death of Dennis Friedrich. In accordance with the plea agreement, Becker must serve 85 percent of a five-year prison term. Upon his release from State prison, Becker will be subject to three years of parole supervision, said Assistant Prosecutor Lynn Heyer.

On April 5, 2008 Becker and Friedrich got into an argument at a residence they both lived in at 4 North Oakland Avenue in Ventnor. Becker, 25, punched Friedrich on the right side of his neck. 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, 62, died of blunt force trauma. The defendant was charged and indicted four months later. Becker remains in the Atlantic County Justice Facility in lieu of \$300,000 bail pending sentencing,

During Wednesday's court hearing Becker admitted that he punched the victim once because the defendant was having a fight with his girlfriend and Friedrich attempted to intervene, Heyer stated.

Becker is scheduled for sentencing at 8:45 a.m. on Feb. 20 before Superior Court Judge Bernard E. DeLury.

*****These charges are merely an accusation and not proof of guilt. In all criminal cases, a charged defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty. 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 conviction of those who commit crimes in Atlantic County.**