

ATLANTIC COUNTY PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE

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Prosecutor

NEWS RELEASE

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MAYS LANDING – A Superior Court Judge sentenced an Atlantic City man to 18 years in prison today for the brutal killing of a 19-year-old man found sliced and beaten to death underneath The Pier at Caesars in Atlantic City on April 25, 2008, Atlantic County Prosecutor Ted Housel stated.

In accordance with a Sept. 28, 2009 plea to aggravated manslaughter, Jerry “Wolf” Soto, 37, must serve 85 percent of the prison term before being eligible for parole for slaying Joseph Frankowski Jr., of Somers Point, Assistant Prosecutor Anne Crater said.

Prior to Superior Court Judge Albert Garofolo imposing Soto’s sentence, he heard from the victim’s mother. Victim Advocate Jacqueline Simonson held up a Mainland Regional High School graduation photo of Frankowski as the victim’s mother described her son as the “light of her life,” a light that Soto “snuffed out.”

The victim’s mother told the court through tears that her son did not stand a chance against the much larger man. She described for the court the graphic photographs she viewed of her son’s lifeless, badly beaten body.

Soto admitted during his September plea hearing that he, Wayne Hoffman, 28, and the victim, were drinking underneath The Pier at Caesars when the defendant and Hoffman assaulted Frankowski. Soto used a broken bottle to inflict the fatal wounds. Hoffman, who pled guilty on Oct. 23 to third-degree aggravated assault, admitted at his hearing that he punched the victim. Hoffman was sentenced to five years of probation. In addition, he spent 315 days in the Atlantic County Justice Facility, Crater said.

An autopsy performed by Atlantic County Medical Examiner Dr. Hydow Park determined Frankowski suffered multiple traumatic injuries including blunt force trauma to the head and a fractured skull. The victim also suffered a brain contusion and multiple lacerations, including cutting injuries to the neck, face, torso and extremities, as well as rib fractures. The cause of death was a combination of the traumatic injuries.

Soto, who has a lengthy arrest record and has not been employed since '98, addressed the court before being sentenced Friday. He apologized to the victim's family for his actions and said the three men were drinking and he "blacked out."

"I'm sorry for what happened," Soto said. "It shouldn't have happened."

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) or visit the Crime Stoppers Website at <http://www.crimestoppersatlantic.com/>. Crime Stoppers offers cash rewards for information leading to the arrest and indictment of those who commit crimes in Atlantic County.