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# Court overturns rule on sentence of convicted man

AUSTIN (AP) — The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals overturned Wednesday the murder conviction and death sentence of Sammie Felder Jr., who had been convicted twice in the slaying of a quadriplegic Korean War veteran.

Three other capital murder convictions and death sentences were upheld, including that of Pamela Lynn Perillo, one of three women on Texas' death row.

Felder, who worked as an aide at an apartment complex for paralyzed people, was accused of robbing and fatally stabbing James Hanks in 1975 at the Houston complex. Hanks, 42, had been paralyzed from a Korean War injury. A camera and wallet were stolen from Hanks.

Hanks' body was found in his bed, in a pool of blood, on March 14, 1975. He had suffered stab wounds in both temples and cuts to his neck. Although still alive when found, he died four days later in a hospital.

In overturning Felder's second conviction, the appeals court said the trial judge should have rejected one potential juror which Felder's lawyer had to excuse on a peremptory challenge. Later, after Felder's peremptory challenges were exhausted, another "objectionable juror" was seated, the appeal contended.

The case was returned to the trial court. Harris County authorities said they hoped to have the conviction reinstated or try the case again.

"It was certainly a horrible, brutal crime, a sordid crime. And I'm certain that we will make every possible effort to . . . have the conviction affirmed on rehearing or to retry the case," said Bill Delmore of the district attorney's office.

According to court records, Felder first had been convicted in the case in 1976. That was overturned by a federal court ruling and a second trial was held in 1986.

In the three other cases, the court upheld the convictions of:

— Ms. Perillo, who was sentenced to death in the February 1980 slayings of Robert Banks of Houston and his friend, Bob Skeens. Both men were strangled.

— According to court records, both men were strangled by two people pulling on opposite ends of a rope that had been wrapped around their necks.

— Denton Alan Crank, sentenced to death in the slaying of Terry Oringderff of Houston. Oringderff, an employee of Rice Food Markets, was shot six or seven times in January 1984 after the store was robbed of more than \$39,000 in cash.

— John Cockrum, sentenced to death in the May 1986 shooting of Eva May, who was killed during a robbery of her store in DeKalb.

# Parents participate in decorating class through mail order

Associated Press

While millions of kids head back to school this fall, some parents will also be putting in time with the books by taking correspondence courses in interior decorating.

Several entrepreneurs have hitched the principle of show and tell to the concept of mail order and come up with the idea of courses geared for do-it-yourself decorators as well as for those seeking career training.

While there are no guarantees of jobs — The American Society of Interior Designers, for example, has no plans to recognize such courses, according to Bill Fellenberg, communications director — a correspondence course can enable an individual to become more comfortable with the idea of decorating a home.

According to decorating author Mary Gilliatt, who recently completed writing a mail-order decorating course to be offered to the public in 1989, such courses can help individuals acquire decorating skills. The decorating assignments that are part of virtually all of the programs make it possible to experience decorating — something that is usually impossible to describe solely in words.

"This is a visual world. By showing what to do instead of just telling, you make it easier to learn," Gilliatt, said. This is especially important in decorating since so many people find it difficult or impossible to visualize how a room will look on completion, she added.

Two of the more widely-known courses are offered by the New York School of Interior Design and the Sheffield School of Interior Design, also in New York.

Sheffield, which began operation in 1985, claims to have enrolled over 9,000 correspondence students since it opened. The New York School of Interior Design began offering courses in the 1920s. About 1,500 to 2,000 students are enrolled at a time, according to Steve McGaughey, who administers the home study program.

Beginning in 1989, TransDesigns of Woodstock, Ga., (which now sells home accessories through direct sales) will sell the Gilliatt course to the public.

# Richards

Continued from Page 1

wrong; we can't know why it's wrong," he said.

Dr. John Nottingham, a psychiatrist from Houston, testified after Brown. Nottingham was contacted by A&M officials to review medical data on Richards. Nottingham reviewed the information in December 1986.

Although Nottingham testified he was not sure exactly what he had previously said to the officials, he testified Wednesday that he "probably said the likelihood was that she (Richards) could not function under the stress of a classroom."

Malone's objection about limited testimony referred to Maria O. Perez, a lecturer in the Modern Languages Department, who followed Nottingham on the stand. Perez said she preferred to testify only on her knowledge of Richards from 1981-82.

She testified that during that period, she never graded tests or provided course outlines for Richards, and that Richards was never incoherent.

After Perez finished, Dr. Tom Pollack, an associate professor of aerospace engineering and former chairman of the Tenure Advisory Committee, faced the committee to complete his testimony from Sept. 7. Pollack served on the TAC from 1983-86 and chaired the committee 1985-86.

The TAC is an informal committee which takes no notes and has no attorneys present during the proceedings. The TAC is the second of four levels of appeals for faculty members.

The TAC recommended in May 1986 that Richards be reinstated in the classroom.

Pollack said there were between 25 and 50 pounds of documents provided by Dr. Clinton Phillips, dean of faculties, for that committee's work. Pollack said the TAC was under pressure from then-President Frank Vandiver, through Phillips, to finish the investigation before the end of the Spring 1986 semester.

There also was pressure to finish because Fallon (liberal arts dean) was scheduled to leave town and the TAC would have needed to interview him quickly, Pollack testified. He said later that Fallon was not interviewed by the committee because Pollack decided Fallon had no evidence the TAC had not heard already.

Pollack said the pressure to reach a quick decision probably jeopardized the TAC's verdict adversely.

Pollack also testified that Phillips pressured him into interviewing as many students as possible. He said around 50 of Richards' former students were interviewed by individual committee members, but no notes were kept at any time.

Pollack testified that several members of the TAC were worried about being accused of making the University's case for them by keeping notes during the interview process.

He told the committee there was a student "ring leader" identified who asked several persons to sign a letter of complaint against Richards.

The only "medical testimony" that the TAC heard was the testimony of Dr. Anne Marie Elmquist, Modern Languages Department head from 1973 to 1983, Pollack said. He said the committee found Elmquist's opinion that Richards' illness would affect her in the classroom to be non-expert medical testimony.

The final testimony Wednesday was that of Dr. Bart Lewis, an associate professor of modern languages. Lewis testified that he has known Richards since spring 1974 and often had shared information on classes and teaching technique with her.

He said he recalled one occasion in 1984 when he helped evaluate the essay portion of one of Richards' exams. He also testified that he never helped her prepare syllabi.

He testified that he had four of Richards' former students in Spring 1986 in his Spanish 206 class. He said they worked hard and received two As, a B and a C.

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