

Cannon executed for 1977 slaying

HUNTSVILLE(AP) — Condemned killer Joseph Cannon admitted he was a dangerous person when he killed a San Antonio woman more than 20 years ago but didn't believe he should be put to death Wednesday evening for something that happened when he was 17.

"I don't know if something changed in my brain or the fact I've grown up and can appreciate the value of my wrongs," Cannon, 38, said last week on death row. "I just want people to know that I'm sorry." Cannon, who had spent more than half of his life on death row, was set for lethal injection for fatally shooting Anne Walsh, 45, a San Antonio attorney and mother of eight.

Walsh's brother, also an attorney, had represented Cannon in a burglary case and convinced her to let him live at her home in September 1977 so he could remain on probation and avoid jail.

A week later, on Sept. 30, Walsh was shot repeatedly by Cannon after she came home for lunch. High on alcohol and drugs, he also tried to rape her and then drove away in one of the family's cars.

"The Good Samaritan story was turned upside down by him," Paul Canales, the assistant district attorney in Bexar County who prosecuted Cannon, said. "He's the type of guy that makes you want to lock your

doors and not pick up hitchhikers." Cannon blamed his behavior on mental problems that started at age 4 when he was hit by a car.

He was kicked out of the first grade and never attended school. Repeatedly in trouble as a juve-

the U.S. Supreme Court be spared because the law sets 18 as the minimum for executions.

The high court on Monday morning rejected the appeal out dissent.

The execution attracted national attention, including from the pope, who granted clemency for the inmate.

Walsh's five sons planned to witness Cannon's death.

"It was devastating when it happened but it's worse now," Walsh said. "We all have kids and we get to know their names."

A brother, Sean Walsh, died three years ago in a plane crash. State officials to begin a list of survivors of murder victims tend executions.

He was reluctant to go to the execution, but he went.

"To me, it's intense," Walsh said. "I'm a police officer in the San Antonio Express-News and Cannon."

"I know I betrayed the non said. 'It bothers me I've done that."

"I am ashamed of the going to die. I am going to die."

Two other condemned men preceded him Wednesday in chambers in Arizona and another execution is set for Friday.

"I just want people to know that I'm sorry."

**Joseph Cannon
Convicted murderer**

nile, he learned to read and write on death row where he picked up the nickname "Electrode," because of his skill repairing electrical devices like fans and radios for fellow inmates.

Cannon would be the fifth Texas inmate convicted of a murder committed at age 17 to be executed since the state resumed capital punishment in 1982.

He is one of at least 27 condemned inmates in Texas who were 17 when they committed murders that earned them a trip to death row.

His attorneys argued before

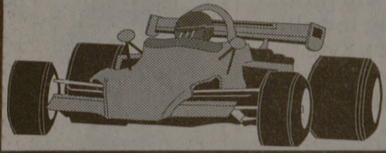
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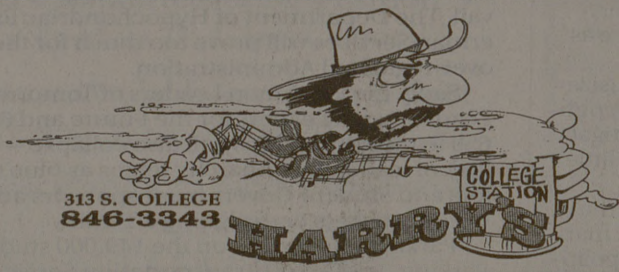
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Women drowned, autopsy findings

GIDDINGS(AP) — Five residents of a home for mentally retarded women who died when a collision sent their van into a stock pond were drowned, according to preliminary autopsy results.

"It's the community's prayer that they didn't suffer," Lee County District Attorney Ted Weems said Wednesday.

"It's just a great sense of loss and tragedy throughout the entire community because of the nature of the victims and the helplessness and what they must have gone through," he said.

Weems said Tuesday's accident remained under investigation. A grand jury is expected to be asked to decide whether to indict an 84-year-old woman who officials say failed to yield the right of way.

Lee County Justice of the Peace Paul Fischer, who pronounced the five women dead, said Wednesday he had not received the official autopsy documents.

But preliminary findings are that all five drowned, he said.

Two women in the van survived after being pulled from the vehicle by an oilfield roustabout who was across the road when the accident occurred.

Twenty-three-year-old Kristen

"It's just a great sense of loss and tragedy...because of the nature of the victims... and what they must have gone through."

**Ted Weems
Lee County District Attorney**

Lindy, a resident of the Country Club Group Home, was in critical condition in Brackenridge Hospital in Austin, 50 miles west of Giddings.

Home staff member Tomeka Kelly, 22, the van's driver, was in se-

rious condition.

The accident occurred in a van headed south on Highway 141 about 3 miles south of Giddings.

The women were given a workshop where residents formed such jobs as assembling silverware, salt and pepper picnic packs.

The Country Club Group worked to prepare residents for more independent life.

Elsie Nitsche, 84, failed to turn right onto the road from northbound, authorities said.

Nitsche, also injured in the accident, was treated and released from Fayette Memorial Hospital in La Grange.

Weems said Texas Department of Public Safety officers had been able to interview witnesses because of their injuries.

"Our next grand jury County meets on May 14, hoping to have all the information together by then to present a grand jury," he said.

Man holds hand of dying girl

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — When Joel LeDon realized he couldn't save a 17-year-old girl who was trapped in her burning car, he did the only thing he could. He held her hand.

After helping rescue three other teen-agers from the burning car after a collision Tuesday, LeDon held Theresa Ann Johnson's hand until she died.

Intense heat from the fire hampered rescue efforts, officials said. The fire was said to have started under the dash near where she was seated.

LeDon said the girl died peacefully. "She did not scream," LeDon said. "She collapsed peacefully."

The victim was the daughter of Bexar County Court-at-Law No. 5 Judge Tim Johnson. Her car collided head-on with another vehicle as the students were on their way to San Antonio Taft High School.

Bexar County deputies interrupted proceedings in the judge's court to tell him about the wreck and drove him to the scene.

Three students injured in the accident were taken to area hospitals.

Matthew Leggett, 15, was in serious condition late

Tuesday at University Hospital. His sister, Virginia, was in fair condition at University Hospital and rice Fox, 18, was in stable condition at Wilford Medical Center.

The driver of the other vehicle, Sunshine Seay, was taken to Wilford Hall and was in stable condition.

LeDon, 32, said he was on his way to work when he arrived at the scene just moments after the collision.

"They were all on top of each other, almost front seat," LeDon said of three passengers.

LeDon said he hesitated before moving the car, concerned that he might harm them. But another motorist who stopped to help reminded LeDon that the fire would kill them.

"It happened so fast it was hard to keep my mind," said LeDon, who estimated the rescue took three to five minutes.

The students fought and yelled in pain while Johnson was rescued. After they got out, Johnson was incoherent she sat trapped in the car.

The fire, which officers said had started under the dash, then consumed the car.

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