

News Advisory

From the Rhode Island Judiciary



Press statement from Judge Susan McGuirl

March 7, 2011: Superior Court Associate Justice Susan E. McGuirl issued the following statement today in response to media inquiries about how the sentence for Michael Woodmansee was formulated in the 1975 slaying of five-year-old Jason Foreman. Judge McGuirl was deputy attorney general in charge of prosecuting Woodmansee after his arrest in 1982.

Judge McGuirl is not giving interviews in this matter. The statement is as follows:

“Almost from the date of charge, there were extended discussions about a disposition of the case involving Superior Court Associate Justice Thomas Needham, Assistant Public Defender Richard Casparian, myself as the Deputy Attorney General, the South Kingstown Police Department and Jason Foreman’s family.

“Among the issues that were of concern to the state were the graphic details of the case being made public and its effect on the Foreman family. The family also wanted to have a funeral service and bury their son, something that would not have been possible until the conclusion of a trial and all appeals were exhausted.

“The case also involved novel legal issues involving the age of the defendant at the time of the crime and time of arrest, and the applicable law at that time. There was also the prospect of the defendant mounting an insanity defense.

“All of those involved knew that the defendant would be released at some time. We discussed with the Foreman family the defendant’s possible release on parole or good time. We did not anticipate due to the condition of the defendant that he would be able to earn the maximum good-time credit. Even though he was eligible after 10 years for a parole review, we believed that it was unlikely the defendant would win parole before serving at least half of his 40-year sentence, and that it was reasonable to expect that he would serve at least two-thirds of that sentence and possibly more. He has served 70 percent of his sentence. It is my understanding that he will have a 10-year suspended sentence with 10 years of probation upon his release.”

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