

# Trial delayed for cripple who says police beat him

The trial of a paraplegic who says he was beaten by two Livonia police officers was adjourned Monday by Livonia 18th District Judge James E. Mies.

The judge simultaneously issued a gag order barring parties involved in

the case from discussing the proceedings.

John S. Strolia, 23, faces charges of resisting arrest stemming from an incident Sept. 12.

He said Livonia officers William Bryant and Ronald Kugler beat him

when they tried to arrest him on a two-year-old bench warrant.

The jury selection was scheduled to take place last Monday. The trial had been set for a later date.

However, Judge Mies, with the approval of the defense and prose-

cution counsels, adjourned the selection until Jan. 29. At that time both the jury selection and trial will take place.

The judge issued a gag order after adjourning the case. It prohibits parties involved from discussing the case

with anyone other than law enforcement officials or witnesses.

Judge Mies said that in order to ensure Strolia's first amendment right to a fair trial, the jury should be chosen with the trial immediately following the selection, to avoid pre-trial publicity.

Both Strolia's attorney, Canton Township trustee Robert Greenstein, and Robert Brzezinski, the assistant city attorney of Livonia who is prosecuting the case, agreed to the adjournment.

"It is not an attempt to prevent the media from releasing information regarding the case. It just prevents the parties involved from discussing it," Judge Mies said.

"The defendant has the right to a fair trial and the jury has the right to make up their own minds without being confused by what they may hear or read," he added.

He said case law permits the order, and that the court has the authority to do anything in its power to ensure a fair trial.

When Strolia's charges of a beating first surfaced several weeks ago, Livonia Mayor Edward McNamara said he would avoid comment about the case until after the trial is concluded.

However, Police Chief Robert Turner denied the defendant's claims.

Strolia said he was approached by officers while he was in his wheelchair near his former Livonia duplex on Farmington Road, south of Plymouth Road.

He said officers beat him with a flashlight, threw him in the back of a patrol car and manhandled him at the police station.

Strolia was arrested for resisting arrest on the bench warrant, stemming from a previous traffic ticket.

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