Waters to be sentenced

Decision expected on death

By ROBERT KIPPER

OAKLAND COUNTY—What should the punishment be for a man who admitted helping his ailing wife carry out her wish to die?

That is the decision Circuit Court Judge William Beer must make and it is expected Friday when Clarkston's Robert C. Waters is scheduled to be sentenced for manslaughter.

Waters, a onetime high school coach and village president in Clarkston, pleaded "no contest" to the charge during his arraignment in December.

That plea, although it neither admits nor denies guilt, must be treated as a guilty plea by the sentencing judge. Manslaughter carries a maxium penalty of 15 years in prison.

WATERS ADMITTED helping his 65-year-old wife Kathleen carry out her death wish. She died of carbon monoxide poisoning in the family car in a closed garage.

In a long statement to sheriff's deputies the day after Mrs. Waters' death, Waters defended assisting his wife, whom he said he still loved. The statement also described Waters' repeated attempts to change his wife's mind.

That statement was admitted as evidence at the arraignment.

In it, Waters described his wife's despondency at the thought of entering a hospital for pyachiatric care. Mrs. Waters had emotional problems, arthritis and heart trouble for some time.

WATERS DESCRIBED his wife as saying:

"I'm not going to the hospital, I am not going behind locked doors. I have nothing to look forward to with my arthritis and coronaries. I am nothing. I am not going to be a vegetable. I am going to take my life."

Waters described kissing his wife after she placed herself in the automobile, attempting to change her mind before leaving her and then returning to the garage another time to try to convince her to abandon the plan.

When his efforts to disuade her failed, Waters said he waited inside the house and said a few prayers while his wife died. Then he returned to the garage, closed his dead wife's eyes and kissed her again.

ASKED WHY he didn't stop his wife, Waters said:

"Rather than die the way she feared, a cripple maybe and mentally affected, I would rather let her make her own choice and die— if I may say so— with dignity than to go through with what she might have faced.

"It had to be her decision, not mine."

WATERS ALSO described his wife's concern for the consequences he would face:

"She said, 'What will happen to you.' I said the sheriff's department will pick me up but I can face that, don't you worry about it."

When Waters was asked if he thought he was committing a crime that day, he said, "I knew I was not following the law."

ALTHOUGH JUDGE Beer's decision will close the case, it won't be the first difficult choice made in the unusual case.

The county prosecutor's office charged Waters only after numerous debates on the legal, moral, and theological questions involved.

The manslaughter charge was less than a second degree murder charge that had been considered.

Franklin plans for bicentennial

FRANKLIN—"We normally get so involved in the past here that it's a perfect setting for observing the bicentennial."

Councilwoman Virginia DeBenham Rogers was referring to Franklin's commitment to its historic district and about the village's bicentennial celebration she is directing.

Restoration of the 138-year-old Daniel Broughton homestead (known as the Hunter's Whip) and its transformation into the home of the Franklin municipal offices is the focal point of our bicentennial projects, said Mrs. Rogers.

"But heritage is only good when you can also look to the future. We're encompassing it all.

"We're including all age groups in the projects and the local committee is made up of representatives from groups throughout the community," she said.

Bicycle paths through the downtown historic center and other points of interest in the village are a major bicentennial project planned by young adults.

Some existing roadways will be used and special pathways will also be constructed as part of the network. All will be subject to the approval of the planning commission. Mrs. Rogers said it will join the Southfield pathway at Franklin Road and go through the downtown district to the cider mill at Fourteen Mile Road. Auxiliary paths will go to other points of interest.

Thomas Bright, an avid biker, is supervising the committee which includes Barbara DeBenham, Fred Hirschman, Royce Johnson and Joni Jacobson. Carmina Brooks Tuksal prepared research for the project and is assisting the group.

Mrs. Rogers said state funding will be sought for the pathways.

Young children are participating in a contest at the Franklin Elementary School to create the village bicentennial symbol. The winning entry will be selected this month and the symbol used throughout the celebration.

Instead of planning its festival part of the observance for July 4, 1976 when most communities will be holding celebrations, Franklin's will be the following Labor Day. The Franklin Community Association will plan the event in place of its annual round-up.

"Between now and the end of 1976 we'll try to have a new project every two months or so to keep the momentum going," Mrs. Rogers continued.

Committee members and the organizations they represent are: David Kerr, volunteer fire department; Richard Graeber, police department; Sid Avesian, Franklin Community Association; Annetta Evans, library.

Also, Gary Bloom, Historical Society; Barbara Dotterer, Franklin Elementary School; Anne Jones, garden club; Arthur Kreger, cemetery association; Dr. Edwin Kerr, professional group.

Joanne Bublitz, Franklin Community Church; Dr. John Eddy, Baptist Church; William Ellison, Franklin Village Band; Diane Lake, Village Players; Lee Templeton and Cal Brown, village representatives at large.

Michigan mirror

Multiple prices confuse buyers

Grabbing a can of whatever from a grocer's shelf may be frustrating when price increases seem to sprout overnight. Even more frustrating is finding two or more prices which suggest dramatically that the highest one is on the top.

Democratic Rep. Lucille McCollough of Dearborn introduced legislation in 1974 to ban price raising once an item has been priced and put on the shelf. The bill didn't make much headway and will be reintroduced, she said.

Althouth the idea sounds great, retailing problems just aren't that simple. In fact, Meijer's Inc., which operates numerous stores in Michigan, announced it felt forced to reverse an experimental process whereby no price on the shelf would be raised. They believe their practice confused customers and customers will be better served if every item in a category has the same price.

ONE PROBLEM INVOLVED markdowns for advertised specials. Under the old system, unsold articles were left with the lower prices while new articles carried a higher price. Customers who found this often demanded several of the new articles at the price stamped for the special.

A similar situation developed when shelves were restocked with higher priced articles and a portion of the stock carried a lower price.

If prices could not be changed, the retailers' recourse would be to put out only a few items at a time, a practice which would be annoying to customers and retailers as well.

Best idea for the customer is to shop where the retailer has a record of fairness.

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