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Ohio Supreme Court Affirms Death Sentence for Akron Man Convicted in 2012

AKRON, Ohio (Thursday, December 15, 2016) – Summit County Prosecutor Sherri Bevan Walsh announced today that the Ohio Supreme Court, in a six to one decision, upheld the conviction and death sentence for Dawud Spaulding. Spaulding, 34, of East Buchtel Avenue in Akron, was sentenced to death in 2013. In 2011, Spaulding shot and killed Erica Singleton and Ernie Thomas and shot Patrick Griffin, leaving him a quadriplegic.

On November 9, 2012, a Summit County jury found Spaulding guilty of the following charges:

- Two counts of Aggravated Murder, with a death penalty specification for killing two or more people
- Attempted Murder - a felony of the 1st degree, with a firearm specification
- Felonious Assault - a felony of the 2nd degree, with a firearm specification
- Domestic Violence - a felony of the 3rd degree
- Having Weapons Under Disability - a felony of the 3rd degree
- Intimidation of a Crime Victim - a misdemeanor of the 1st degree
- Violation of a Protection Order - a misdemeanor of the 1st degree

In today's ruling, the Court determined Spaulding had effective defense counsel, and rejected several claims that Spaulding's rights were violated. The Court also ruled the death sentence was appropriate for the crime.

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A new execution date for Spaulding has not yet been scheduled.

“Dawud Spaulding stalked, terrorized, and attacked Erica before he killed her. This was a brutal, calculated shooting spree that left two people dead and a third near death,” said Prosecutor Walsh. “This case illustrates the seriousness of domestic violence. The prosecutors in my Domestic Violence Unit worked hard to ensure justice for Erica Singleton, Ernie Thomas and Patrick Griffin. Thankfully the Ohio Supreme Court agreed.”

Singleton, Spaulding’s girlfriend and mother of his seven-year-old son and two-year-old daughter, had filed for a civil protection order and was in hiding from Spaulding when he murdered her. Spaulding had discovered where Singleton was staying and drove by the house on the morning of December 15, 2011 shooting and paralyzing Griffin, who was leaving the home. Later that morning, Spaulding returned to the home and shot and killed Singleton and Thomas, Griffin’s uncle, in the driveway. Because the jury found Spaulding guilty of the specification for murdering two people, Spaulding was eligible to receive the death penalty.

This case was the first capital murder case prosecuted in Summit County Domestic Violence Court.

About the Summit County Domestic Violence Court and the Summit County Prosecutor’s specialized Domestic Violence Unit:

In 2011, the Summit County Common Pleas Court, with cooperation of the Summit County Prosecutor’s Office, created the state’s first Felony Domestic Violence Court. Summit County Common Pleas Court Judge Paul Gallagher oversees felony domestic violence cases. The Summit County Prosecutor’s Office also has a team of highly trained prosecutors dedicated to assisting domestic violence victims. Our Domestic Violence Unit takes a close look at every felony domestic violence case which comes to our office. Offenders go through a screening process to determine if they are eligible for an intensive 52-week program which aims at getting to the cause of the problem. The overall goal is to prevent any future acts of violence.