

Sumner...

Continued from front page

Sumner read their statements in the courtroom. Following are excerpts from each statement:

Cathy Sumner's Impact Statement

I remember the day God blessed us with our precious grandson – Shawn Michael Sumner – on March 29, 1999. I was elated to be in the delivery room and see him draw his first breath. I experienced such joy to see the new life of my first grandchild and watch him grow into a beautiful little boy.

I think of the wonderful times we had when I babysat for him. He would call me when he awoke in the morning, "Mamma, Mamma," and I would creep into his room and say, "Good morning, little doll baby." His response was always the same: "Am I Mamma's little doll baby?" I would scoop him up into my arms and he would give me those soft, juicy kisses. I knew they were from his heart and that his love was very genuine for me.

These are such wonderful memories for me, not only the quality of time we spent together, but at that moment I knew he was safe in my care. I repeatedly discussed my concerns and fears with my son and husband about Shawn's life with his mother, Cindy, and her boyfriend, Travis Yoder. We constantly worried about his home environment.

On May 10, 2001, we received [the dreaded] call from Cindy, telling us that Shawn had an accident and was taken to Shands Hospital. We arrived at the hospital,

knowing it had to be a severe injury but never dreaming it was life threatening. Police officers and homicide

"Mamma's" Little Doll baby was fighting for his life in the operating room.

A large portion of his skull had to be removed to release the pressure of his swollen brain. When we walked into the ICU, the sight of my precious grandson buckled my knees...."

—Cathy Sumner

detectives were there, closely guarding Travis Yoder.

"Mamma's" Little Doll baby was fighting for his life in the operating room. A large portion of his skull had to be removed to release the pressure of his swollen brain. When we walked into the ICU, the sight of my precious grandson buckled my knees. His head was swollen twice its size. His eyes were so swollen that his eyelids would not even close.

We talked constantly to him, prayed for him and told him stories, but there was no sign of movement. The surgeon said there was no hope and recommended we take him off life support. Lying in his parents' laps and surrounded by all his family, blood pouring from his little head, my beloved Shawn went to heaven to be with Jesus, May 11, at 10:46 p.m.

Before Shawn died our family did not attend church, didn't pray, didn't read our Bible. Through Shawn's death we have given our hearts and lives to the Lord Jesus Christ. We couldn't save our two-year-old toddler, even though we tried desperately, but through God's grace, Shawn was used that we might be saved. What we do have left is the promise that one day we will all be together again in eternity.

My prayer goes out to the family of Travis Yoder. I understand he came from a good home and loving family.

I know their hearts must be breaking, also.

Judge Dearing, I ask the court, "Is 25 years in prison justice for the cold-blooded murder of an innocent child?"

Marlin Sumner's Impact Statement

Your Honor, I was told this was my right to speak in Shawn's behalf due to his being the victim of a violent crime, but, as grandparents, we had no rights when he was alive. Those who did have the rights and responsibility to remove Shawn from his abusive home chose not to do anything about it. Like the doctor at Orange Park Hospital who refused to report Shawn's suspected child abuse to DFC just four weeks prior to his death, saying it was not serious enough. My wife reported this to DFC and called back 21 times with more information, but they would not call her back.

A stranger can walk into your family's lives and change them forever. This was Travis Yoder. We knew from the beginning he was trouble. He had been arrested for drugs and spousal abuse. We saw letters from Shawn's mother indicating she knew Travis was taking and selling drugs, but it didn't matter to her. Shawn knew Travis only four months, but in that time he was abused, lived in fear and pain and was murdered.

Shawn's death greatly affected my family. I watched my grandson's face swell so much I hardly recognized him. I watched medical personnel take X-rays of his many injuries and I watched as they removed him from life support. I watched as that little boy took his last breath and died. I watched my son hold his dead son for the last time. I watched as they shut the casket. I saw my grandson for the last time that day. I helped carry my grandson to his grave.

—Shirley Shaw is a volunteer who is assisting the Justice Coalition with this issue of Victim's Advocate while Editor Cathy Sumner recuperates from an automobile accident.

Unsolved Murders

Your help is needed in the following cases. If you have any information, no matter how insignificant, please notify the authorities.



Name: Moussa Set

Info: He was found dead on May 6, 2003, inside the Amoco on Beach Blvd. and Art Museum Dr. He was found lying on the floor and the bulletproof booth was open.

Reward: \$5,000

Notify: JSO at 630-0500
Det. Lyle at 630-1773



Name: Keith Cauley

Info: Keith's body was recovered from a grave in Putman County on August 23, 2001. His death is currently being investigated by the JSO Homicide Unit.

Reward: \$2,500

Notify: JSO at 630-0500



Name: William "Bill" Klinedinst

Info: This 61-year-old loving husband and father was murdered July 4, 1992, on I-295 by a rock thrown through the windshield of his car.

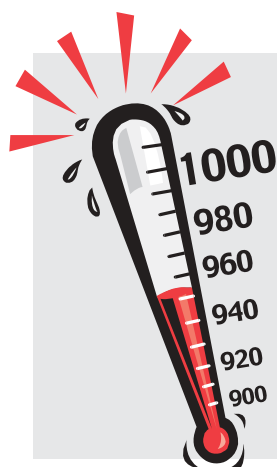
Reward: \$90,430

Notify: JSO at 630-0500
or 630-2172

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