

Soquel killer denied parole

Ohta Family (murder of)
By JENNIFER SQUIRES

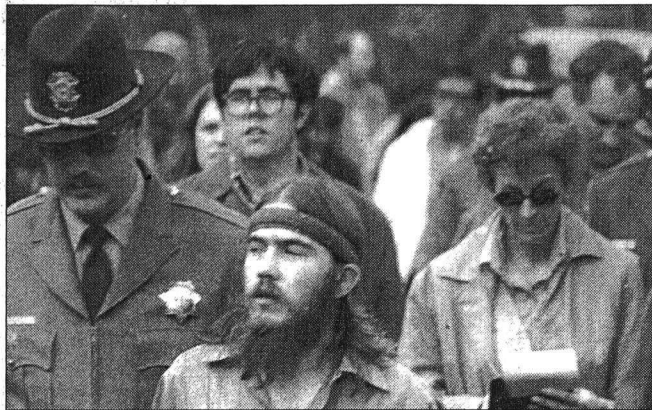
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

A convicted mass murderer who killed a Soquel family execution-style nearly four decades ago was denied parole Wednesday, the District Attorney's Office reported.

John Linley Frazier, now 62, refused to attend his parole hearing, according to prosecutor Ariadne Symons, who represented the District Attorney's Office. The Board of Prison Terms denied him parole for five years, which is the maximum allowed, according to Symons.

IONE "This was a shockingly cold blooded crime which the Santa Cruz community still remembers and suffers from," she said. "Some people deserve to be punished for the rest of their lives. Frazier is such a man."

Frazier was 24 when he shot Santa Cruz eye surgeon Victor Ohta, his wife Virginia, sons Taggart, 11, and Derrick, 13, and Ohta's secretary, Dorothy



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel file

John Linley Frazier, center, walks with members of the media and the jury during his murder trial.

Cadwallader. He left their bodies floating in the pool of the Ohta's Soquel hills home.

After committing the murders, Frazier set the Ohtas' home ablaze. He left behind a note that declared "World War 3" had begun and spoke of killing people who "misused the environment," according to Sentinel archives. The Ohtas

had cut down trees on their property to build their house.

Sister Gracie Ross, who was Taggart's sixth-grade teacher at Good Shepherd School in Santa Cruz, wrote a letter opposing Frazier's release. She said the Ohta family was "civic-minded" and "peace-loving and outgoing." She accompanied her students to the family's

funeral at Holy Cross Catholic Church and still remembers the sight of four caskets coming up the aisle. "I don't think any man who killed people so savagely should be released from prison," said Ross, who now teaches in Santa Clara. "It won't bring the Ohtas back but it's some insurance that he won't do it to another family."

Frazier had been sentenced to death following his conviction by a San Mateo County jury in 1971. However, when capital punishment was ruled unconstitutional in 1975, all death penalty sentences were commuted to life sentences. Symons said those sentences actually meant prisoners were eligible for parole after serving seven years.

Frazier, who is incarcerated at Mulholland Creek State Prison in Ione, has been denied parole eight times in the 30 years since. Symons said he has chosen not to participate in any educational or vocational programs at the prison, and also has refused to cooperate with mental health professionals.