

Ohta Family (murder of)

RP 11-2008 REGISTER

# Convicted mass murderer Frazier denied parole

REGISTER-PAJARONIAN STAFF REPORT

John Linley Frazier, who was convicted in 1971 of killing five people at an upscale home in the Soquel hills in October 1970, was denied parole for an eighth time, Santa Cruz County District Attorney Bob Lee announced Wednesday.

Frazier was convicted of murdering Dr. Victor Ohta, his wife, Virginia, sons Derrick, 13, and Taggart, 11, and Ohta's secretary, Dorothy Cadwallader. He was initially sentenced to death, but his sentence was automatically changed to life in prison when the death penalty was ruled unconstitutional in 1975. Because California did not have life in prison without possibility of parole at that

time, Frazier first became eligible for parole in 1979.

Frazier stalked the Ohta family, and broke into their home at 999 Rodeo Gulch Road while they were out and awaited their return. He bound and gagged each person, then systematically executed them one by one with gunshots, according to the district attorney's office. Frazier then set multiple blazes at the home, and fire officials found the bodies in the swimming pool when they were looking for a fire hydrant that had been installed in the yard. Watsonville Police Chief Ray Belgard, who died last year, was the district attorney's office's lead investigator at the time of Frazier's conviction.

The mass murder, combined with 13 murders committed by Herbert Mullin and eight by Edmund Kemper around the same period, led to Santa Cruz being dubbed the "Murder Capital of the World."

Assistant District Attorney Ariadne Symons attended the parole hearing and argued against Frazier's release.

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

Frazier refused to attend the parole hearing, stating that "the board members were institu-

tional bureaucrats deprived of the truth" and claiming that they had no authority over him, according to the district attorney's office.

The parole board denied Frazier parole on the ground that he would pose an unreasonable risk of danger to society if he were to be released. Parole was denied for five years, the maximum time possible. The board found that Frazier's crimes were calculated and heinous and that he was a cold-blooded killer, noting that he has not participated in any educational or vocational programs and has refused to cooperate with mental health professionals, according to the district attorney's office.