



For Immediate Release

Thursday, June 26, 2025

Man Sentenced To 60 Years In Prison For Killing TCU Student

Fort Worth, TX – Matthew Purdy Jr., now 23 years old, pled guilty Thursday to murdering TCU student Wes Smith and was sentenced to 60 years in prison. He also was sentenced to 20 years in prison for the aggravated assault of another TCU student he pistol-whipped right after murdering Wes Smith.

Purdy was sentenced in eight other felony charges, for a total of 206 years in prison. The sentences will run concurrently.

Tarrant County Assistant District Attorneys Ashlea Deener and Rose Anna Salinas represented the State.

In the early hours of September 1, 2023, TCU student Wes Smith was standing outside of a bar in the West 7th District helping a friend get a ride home. Purdy came up to him and shot him twice. Once Wes fell to the ground, Purdy shot him again in the back of the head because he wanted to make sure Wes was dead.

Purdy then pistol-whipped an 18-year-old woman as she ran from the shooting. In a police interview, he said he didn't shoot her because he ran out of bullets. Police later found Purdy near Farrington Field, about two blocks from where the shooting occurred.

Smith, a 21-year-old junior from Tennessee, was taken to a local hospital where he later was pronounced dead.

Wes's father, Philip Smith, told Purdy during an allocution that he believed his son died a hero, especially with the last shot that killed him.

"I believe he died a hero taking that bullet so no one else had to," Philip Smith said. "You have a dark and ugly soul – if you have any soul at all."

Wes's two brothers also spoke, saying Wes is always with them and that his legacy will live on.

Wes's mother, Dorree Smith, told Purdy what a wonderful person her son was.

"Wes had a way of drawing out the best of us," she said. "Our family of five has a big, big hole."

He loved his friends and family, lived life fully with boundless energy, had a great way of listening, and so much more.

"Wes is now in Heaven. You are still on Earth," Dorree Smith told Purdy. "You have a chance to give your story a different ending. ... I pray you can find a different ending by finding God's love. Live like Wes."

Special thanks to Fort Worth Homicide Detective Cedillo, the Fort Worth Police Department, DA Investigator Benjamin Lopez, and DA Victim Advocate Cece Jones for their work on the case, their dedicated efforts to bring justice to the victim, and their commitment to keeping our community safe.