



For Immediate Release

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Arlington Man Sentenced to Life Without Parole for Murdering Estranged Wife

Fort Worth, TX – A Tarrant County jury found Frederick Spears, 57, guilty of capital murder for killing his estranged wife. He received an automatic life sentence in prison without parole.

Tarrant County Assistant District Attorneys Chase Payne and Allenna Bangs prosecuted the case.

"The jury spoke for Tarrant County, returning their verdict in a mere 17 minutes," District Attorney Phil Sorrells said. "We stand with victims and we hold violent criminals accountable."

On September 22, 2025, Frederick Spears went to the Arlington home of his estranged wife, 53-year-old Mary Spears, and stabbed her multiple times, killing her.

"She was slaughtered and left for dead," Bangs said.

Just days earlier, Spears had been arrested for threatening a family member with kitchen knives, and an emergency protective order had been issued directing him to stay away from his family.

Spears went out and bought a knife and saw kit – what Payne called "a murder kit" – and returned to the home early in the morning of September 22, 2025.

He waited in the backyard near the side of the house until Mary stepped outside.

When she saw him, Payne said she likely uttered her final words: "What took you so long?"

Spears attacked her. Though she weighed only 83 pounds, she tried to defend herself.

"She tried to fight back," Payne told jurors. "She was unsuccessful."

Spears repeatedly stabbed her, pushing her to the ground before plunging the knife into her heart.

Her son later found her unresponsive in the backyard, bleeding from multiple stab wounds.

"He made good on the promise he had been making (to Mary) for years," Bangs said. "He always said, 'I'm going to kill you.'"

Police later found Spears behind a church in Arlington. When officers approached, he started stabbing himself and attempted to stab a police K-9. Officers intervened, transported him to the hospital, and then placed him under arrest.

"Find him guilty of capital murder and nothing else," Payne asked of jurors.

DA Investigator Darla Dowell also worked on this case. Our office thanks the Arlington Police Department and the U.S. Marshals Service for their dedicated work in securing justice and protecting the community.