

Killer of Stouffville kids' dad gets 12 years

BY JOE FANTAUZZI
Staff Writer

The man who murdered the father of two Stouffville boys was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole for 12 years.

Rian Quincy Dix of Newmarket was convicted in February of second-degree murder after stabbing Michael Thornhill, 19, July 2004 in the Tim Hortons parking lot at Davis and Longford drives in Newmarket.

In her victim impact statement, read by Crown attorney Kelly Wright, Mr. Thornhill's mother, Laurie Thornhill, called the loss of her son "a tragic assault to the human soul."

After the sentence was delivered by Justice Alexander Sosna in a Whitby courtroom Thursday, Ms. Thornhill called the murder "a disgrace."

"We have been sentenced to a lifetime," Ms. Thornhill told The Era-Banner in an exclusive interview following the sentencing.

A lifetime of a loss that can never be replaced. I

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don't feel that justice is done. I know that the Crown attorney has done her very best, but our system ... something has to be done to change it. It's a slap on the wrist."

Ms. Thornhill takes no solace in the sentence.

"Michael was a very, very special young man and nothing can ever compare to that," she said.

"No one," Ms. Thornhill described her son as her best friend.

"I'm going to need a lot of help to get through a lot," she said. "I feel lost, I feel completely lost."

While at the Tim Hortons, a youth and Mr. Thornhill argued. The youth then con-

tacted Mr. Dix, who arrived on the scene and stabbed Mr. Thornhill in the parking lot, court ruled.

The two men were strangers.

A young offender previously pleaded guilty to manslaughter, was sentenced to time served and released.

Clad in a blue dress shirt, grey dress pants without a belt and shackles, Mr. Dix pleaded guilty to three other criminal charges — theft over \$5,000, dangerous driving and resisting arrest —

stemming from his time on the run following Mr. Thornhill's murder.

After the stabbing, Mr. Dix fled to Sudbury, Ms. Wright said.

While in Sudbury, Mr. Dix stole a pickup truck. When the police tried to arrest him, he rammed their cruisers and pinned an officer with the truck, Ms. Wright said. The officer was not hurt.

Mr. Dix was subdued with a Taser before he was taken into custody.

He will serve a two-year

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concurrent sentence for those charges.

Mr. Thornhill's family had moved to Newmarket after falling on hard times and was approved for social housing, living there only eight months before his

murder. They were previously residents of Stouffville and Thornhill.

Mr. Thornhill was the father of two boys who live with their mother in Stouffville.

In a prepared statement, read by his attorney Joseph Di Luca, Mr. Dix said he feels remorse about the death of Mr. Thornhill.

"What I did to Michael Thornhill is something I'll never forget," Mr. Di Luca read, as Mr. Dix lowered his head.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SUNDAY, MAY 6

The 37th annual Sacred Music Night, featuring the Muddle Family, the Stouffville Christian School Choir, The Believers chorus and soloists, Susan Brown and Jennifer Thunem, will be held at 7 p.m. in St. James Presbyterian Church, 6432 Main St., Stouffville. Free-will offering, refreshments.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 9

The Musselman's Lake Residents Association meets at 7 p.m. at Cedar Beach. E-mail: musselmanslake@hotmail.com for more details.

THURSDAY, MAY 10

The ABCs of talking to your kids about money, a free one-hour workshop for parents, is being presented at the Whitchurch-Stouffville Public Library from 7:30 to 8:30 p.m. Registration is required. Come to the library at 30 Burkholder St. in Stouffville or call 905-642-7323 to register.

SATURDAY, MAY 12

Orchard Park Public School Fun Fair is from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. There is something for everyone from jumping castles to games galore. Try your luck

at the cake walk or bid on one of the items donated by local merchants in the silent auction. Everyone welcome. School is on Sunset Boulevard, south of Main Street and east of Ninth Line.

The Stouffville Royal Canadian Legion's annual golf tournament starts 12:30 p.m. at the Foxbridge Golf course in Uxbridge. Cost is \$80 each (includes golf, power cart, lunch and dinner).

THURSDAY, MAY 17

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Prayer Breakfast is being held at Station Creek Golf and Country Club from 7 to 9 a.m. sharp. Featuring a hot buffet breakfast. Guest speaker, the Rev. Rocky Dundas, former Toronto Maple Leaf. Tickets are \$20 and are available at Candlelight & Memories or call 905-640-4584. Log on to wsprayerbreakfast.com

The Whitchurch-Stouffville Chamber of Commerce Golf Tournament is at Sleepy Hollow Golf and Country Club. Lunch at 11:30 a.m.; shotgun start 1 p.m. Dinner 7 p.m. Entry fee (\$160) due by April 27. Sponsored by SCS Consulting Group Ltd. Call 905-642-4227.



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