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June trial set in Renteria case

By Brian Sharp
 Senior Reporter

Though the death of Francisco Renteria remains surrounded by questions, a judge provided enough answers Friday to clear the way for the trials of three indicted officials.

In a ruling Friday, Lancaster County District Court Judge Donald Endacott assigned the cases for trial in June.

Lincoln Police officers Luke Wilke and Stephen Shellpeper were indicted in December on third-degree assault charges. Fire Capt. Danny Wright was charged with official misconduct and abuse of public records.

Endacott also ruled that Special Prosecutor Robert Bartle's authority in the case was "limited to prosecuting only the specific indictments returned by this grand jury against these defendants."

Bartle had asked for clarification of his position, stating that he be-

lieved probable cause existed to file felony charges against one or more of the defendants.

Bartle wrote, "It is clear ... that no other prosecuting attorney will be able to act upon this information except for the special prosecutor."

After Endacott's ruling was released, however, Bartle said filing additional charges now was a question for County Attorney Gary Lacey. Bartle will turn over investigative findings to Lacey this week.

Lacey did not return Daily Nebraskan phone calls this weekend.

Carlos Monzon, a lawyer for the Renteria family, said he talked to Lacey on Friday about filing additional charges, but the county attorney was not very receptive to the idea.

Bartle said he could not appeal Endacott's ruling. The decision was not a surprise or a disappointment, he said, but an answer. The answer clarified the special prosecutor's role for him and all other interested parties,

he said. The Renteria family, Monzon and members of the Hispanic community criticized Bartle in recent weeks for not filing felony charges.

Bartle also said he would not appeal Endacott's earlier ruling that dismissed an indictment of official misconduct against Police Chief Tom Casady.

The year-and-a-half-long delay would not be in the best interest of those affected or the community, he said.

The Nebraska Supreme Court last week denied a request by the Renteria family to order Bartle to file additional charges.

The family is now considering filing in another court, he said. Monzon did not specify when additional action might be taken, or what the action might be.

Endacott did grant Bartle his request for co-counsel, assigning Patrick W. Healey to assist the special prosecutor.

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By J. Christopher Hain
 Senior Reporter

The cost of the death penalty was the focus Friday of efforts to support a bill in the Legislature's Judiciary Committee that would repeal the death penalty.



LEGISLATURE

LB18, sponsored by Sen. Ernie Chambers of Omaha, would replace the death penalty with life imprisonment or life imprisonment without the possibility of parole.

Nelson Potter, a University of Nebraska-Lincoln philosophy professor and chairman of Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty, said the death penalty was a costly law.

"It's more expensive to attempt to put someone to death than it is to keep that same person in prison for the rest of his life," Potter said.

He said the cost of the death penalty in Nebraska had not been adequately studied, but it should have been.

A report issued in January by the

Nebraska Legislative Research Division found it was difficult to determine the cost of the death penalty in Nebraska. But based on studies in North Carolina and Kansas, the report concluded that death penalty cases were likely to be more costly than murder cases where the death penalty was not issued.

"The question is whether the state should spend the time, the money, the other resources," Chambers said when he introduced the bill.

Scott Wesely, coordinator for Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty, said the death penalty was not seen by law enforcement as an effective deterrent to crime. He said many states without the death penalty had low homicide rates.

"Deterrence is a myth," Wesely said.

Rebecca Mehring said she struggled to listen to the testimony of those wanting to repeal the death penalty.

Her father, Eugene Zimmerman of Grand Island, was murdered on March 6, 1979, by Charles Palmer. Palmer is still on death row.

Mehring said that was where he should be.

Cost of death, life focus of debate

"It's more expensive to attempt to put someone to death than it is to keep that same person in prison for the rest of his life."

NELSON POTTER

UNL philosophy professor.

She said she was not a revenge seeker, but the death penalty would prevent Palmer from brutally killing another man.

"It's the only way to keep him from finding the legal maneuver that will eventually set him free," Mehring said.

Two other bills dealing with death penalty issues were quashed by the committee.

LB755 would have limited the appeals process in death penalty cases.

LB310 would have changed the method of execution in Nebraska from the electric chair to lethal injection.

Horses

Continued from Page 1
 was helpful.

"If you don't do it every day, it's easy to forget," Barnett said.

Experiencing new ideas and seeing how other riders work is important, he said.

Anderson, who was in charge of the event, was helped by undergraduate and graduate students who oversaw the event's progression. Riders also volunteered to help the presenters, Anderson said.

Al Dunning, a professional horseman from Scottsdale, Ariz., was the main presenter of the event. Dunning is one of the top trainers in the country, conducting horse and rider training clinics across the United States and abroad. He discussed the founda-

tions of horse training and developing maneuvers for performance horses.

Greg Darnall of Lone Oak, Texas, and Dr. Earl Gaughn, a veterinarian with Kansas State University Equine Surgery also presented at the event.

"It's a really good opportunity to have Al Dunning come out and give this," said Lisa Hathaway, a sophomore animal science/pre-law major. "It's learning from the best."

Hathaway, who has helped with the event for two years, said the sessions were helpful to her as part of the University Horse Judging Team.

"The trainers are qualified and knowledgeable—they produce winners," Hathaway said.

Registrants from as far away as Illinois attended the event.

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