

NORTHWEST HERALD

Judge orders 40 years for Huntley murder

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WOODSTOCK – In sentencing a man to 40 years in prison for the beating death of his girlfriend, a McHenry County judge Friday called it “one of the worst cases of domestic violence” she’d ever seen.

A jury in November found 45-year-old Robert Signorile guilty of first-degree murder for the death of Michelle Mathieu. It took jurors 90 minutes to convict him of the crime.

Medical crews responded March 18, 2012, to the couple’s Sun City, Huntley, home where they found Mathieu, 52, unconscious and face down in vomit. She died after languishing six days in a coma.

Autopsy photos showed the woman was covered in bruises, and medical testimony revealed she had fractured ribs and spine and a head trauma that ultimately killed her.

Standing before Judge Sharon Prather on Friday, Signorile maintained that he had nothing to do with the crime.

“I love Michelle more than anybody in this whole courtroom,” he said. “I did not do this crime like they say I did, and I’ll fight till the day I die to prove my innocence.”

Cellphone videos retrieved from Signorile’s phone and shown during trial were “probably one of the most disturbing things this court has seen,” Prather said.

In the clips, Signorile’s heard asking Mathieu how she got bruised, to which she responded “because you beat the s--t outta me.” A picture taken hours before help arrived depicted Mathieu in the same position in which first responders found her.

“Michelle might be here today had Robert Signorile not left her on the floor dying more and more, minute by minute,” said her sister, Marina Kuhn, reading from a letter.

Assistant State’s Attorney Patrick Kenneally said that Signorile had “dismantled another human emotionally, spiritually, physically.”

“He took a person and humiliated them, tortured them, beat them ... until she was dead,” he said.

Mathieu's family hoped other victims of domestic violence would reach out for help. They pointed to agencies such as Turning Point of McHenry County.

"I caught every word [of what the judge said]," Mathieu's brother, Charles, said outside the courtroom. "She didn't minimize what Michelle meant and what he took away from her."

Added Kuhn: "Her self-esteem. Her spirit."

During trial, Signorile's public defenders argued that Mathieu was an alcoholic and that her injuries were the result of a seizures and falls. Kenneally called it a "comically bad defense."

"It's evident that alcohol did play a negative role in his life and put him in the position that he's in today," Assistant Public Defender Angelo Mourelatos said.