Mother of slain officer: Losing child tore world apart

By JAY STAPLETON Staff Writer

DAYTONA BEACH -- She loved the color pink and decorating her house for Christmas. "She loved laughter."

The mother of slain Corrections Officer Donna Fitzgerald on Tuesday during testimony held a pink necklace she gave to "her princess" on her 8th birthday. Joann Dunn described feelings of her loss to a jury which will recommend whether Fitzgerald's killer should live or die.

"To lose your child to violence tears your whole world apart," Dunn said.

Enoch Hall, 40, was already serving two life sentences for kidnapping and rape. He was convicted last week of premeditated murder for killing Fitzgerald, 50, on June 25, 2008, in a work area at Tomoka Correctional Institution.

Fitzgerald, who had been supervising Hall in a work program at the prison, was stabbed more than 15 times.

During the first day of the penalty phase of his trial, State Attorney R.J. Larizza and prosecutor Leah Case started the argument for the death sentence for Hall.

Among aggravators that make the death penalty appropriate, prosecutors said the murder was especially "heinous atrocious and cruel and committed in a cold calculating and premeditated manner." They also said the fact that Fitzgerald was a law enforcement officer and that Hall was already serving time for a violent crime should be taken into consideration.

A woman who was kidnapped and raped by Hall in 1992 in the Florida panhandle also testified about Hall's attack on her, which sent him to federal prison for life.

Fitzgerald's brother, Donnie Shure, and sister, Dana Shure, each read letters filled with grief. "When I was little, Donna used to braid my hair," Dana said. "The biggest and best sister ever."

It was the first time the jury heard the details of Fitzgerald's personal life.

Fitzgerald's mother described her daughter as popular. She was homecoming queen and valedictorian at her high school in New Hampshire, Dunn said.

She read the last Mother's Day card she would ever get from her daughter. In the card, Fitzgerald said she was glad they had become "grown-up friends."

"I will never be able to enjoy holidays, especially Christmas," Dunn said. "I'm sentenced to my entire life being filled with grief."

jay.stapleton@news-jrnl.com