

Judge on death sentence: Boca Raton man's traumatic childhood no excuse for murder

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FORT LAUDERDALE — A Broward judge today sentenced a Boca Raton man to death for hog-tying, beating, strangling and robbing a 72-year-old man in Oakland Park.

In February, a Broward County jury convicted Eric Kurt Patrick, 46, of first-degree murder for the September 2005 slaying of Steven Schumacher.

In June, the same jurors voted 7-5 to recommend the death sentence.

Circuit Judge Ilona Holmes imposed the death sentence today, said prosecutor Shari Tate.

Police said Patrick planned to rob Schumacher, an openly gay man who frequented the Cubby Hole bar in Fort Lauderdale.

The 10-time convicted felon confessed to the killing, saying he beat Schumacher in the man's home because he made a pass at him.

Defense attorneys had urged jurors to spare Patrick's life by detailing accounts of his "systematic, brutal, sadistic treatment" as a child.

But Tate argued that Patrick's sad childhood did not outweigh the brutality of the murder.

Patrick methodically hog-tied Schumacher, knocked three teeth out of his mouth, and pummeled and strangled him, Tate said.

Schumacher even left to get crack cocaine and returned to smoke it, while Schumacher lay dying in his own bathtub, she said.

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