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Spence convicted of second slaying

BRYAN (UPI) — David Wayne Spence, already sentenced to die for the stabbing of one teenager, was found guilty of a second slaying and could be given a second death-by-injection sentence.

Spence was found guilty of killing Kenneth Franks, 18, one of three teenagers whose mutilated bodies were found in a park near Lake Waco in 1982.

A jury of seven women and five men deliberated about 4½ hours Thursday before ruling Spence, 27, guilty. Spence bowed his head, showing little emotion upon hearing the verdict.

After closing arguments prior to jury deliberations, Spence asked State District Judge W.T. McDonald if he could make arguments in his defense but the request was denied.

The punishment phase of the trial, moved to Bryan because of publicity, was recessed after the testimony of one Waco man. The jury will decide whether to sentence Spence to life in prison or death by injection. The punishment phase was to resume Friday.

Spence was charged with capital murder in the death of Franks. The Waco teenager's body was

found July 13, 1982, along with those of Jill Montgomery and Raylene Rice, both 17 of Waxahachie.

The three were allegedly killed in a cause of mistaken identity. Authorities said Spence was offered \$5,000 by Muneer Mohammed Deeb to kill Deeb's girlfriend, who looked like Montgomery. Spence has been sentenced to die for Montgomery's death.

Franks' mother, Sandra Saddler, said she felt gratified by the conviction.

During closing arguments Thursday, defense attorneys tried to undermine the testimony of Anthony and Gilbert Melendez, who have pleaded guilty to two of the killings and have been sentenced to life in prison. Attorneys pointed out that the brothers were convicted felons at the time of the killings.

McLennan County District Attorney Vic Feazzell said, "we didn't have Billy Graham or the Pope out there to tell us what was going on" but the jurors needed to hear the testimony of someone at the scene.