

VICTIM'S IMPACT STATEMENT
OF
ELIZABETH SNELLING HUPP

Your Honor,

My name is Elizabeth Snelling Hupp, and I would like to talk to you about my father, Claude Snelling, who saved my life when I was just 16 years old. On September 10, 1975, I went to bed like any other night without a care in the world. A few hours later, my world was turned upside down. I was awakened by an intruder, Joseph DeAngelo, who was wearing a ski mask and pointing a gun at me, saying that he was taking me with him and that if I made any noise, he would kill me. My father must have heard me crying and woke up. DeAngelo had taken me out of the house out the back door and through the gate that separated our backyard from the car port and driveway. When we were under the car port, I heard my dad yell something and saw him pause in the kitchen for just a moment before he charged out of the house through the back door near us. DeAngelo fired 2 shots, hitting my dad. He then turned the gun on me as I was down on the ground. My only thought was, "This is it" and put my head down, expecting him to kill me. Instead, he started kicking me in the head and face, then ran off down the driveway. I ran back into the house to find my dad had collapsed at the front door and my mom hovering over him. I know in my heart that he was still trying to save me by going through the front door and cutting him off in the front yard. But he never got that far. My dad lay at the front door, bleeding to death, and ended up dying on the way to the hospital. I truly believe that if anything had happened to me that night and he couldn't save me, that would have killed him. My dad was such a gentle soul and loving, kind-hearted man. My mom always said he was such a big softie! My dad died saving my life that night and is my hero!

My dad and I were always very close, and I loved him so much!! We loved to go hiking in the mountains together, and we had some great talks. He was such a great dad, was never judgmental and wouldn't preach to me. Instead, through talking about a situation I was dealing with, whether it was school, friends, or boys, he would help me figure things out on my own. My mom and dad both had a very strong faith in God, and we were always very active in the church. My dad taught Sunday School and Bible studies, and he was an usher and deacon. However, his faith did not end at the church doors – it filled every part of his personal life, with his family and friends, and his professional life as a journalism professor at College of the Sequoias with his colleagues and students. I believe he absolutely loved every aspect of his life!

Our strong faith in God is what helped my mom and me and my brothers get through the tough years following my dad's death. We somehow managed to stay in the same house, but with added security. I slept in my mom's room for the next year, because I was too afraid to sleep in my bedroom and be by myself. Knowing that my dad's murderer was never caught and was still out there somewhere left us all feeling very vulnerable.

Eventually with God's help and the love and support of our family, friends, and our church family, our fear and grief lessened with time, and we started getting on with our lives. My mom never worried that the murderer was not caught. She always said he would face judgment from God eventually and turned it over to Him. I started to believe that myself as well and didn't want to waste my life worrying that he was out there and could come back.

On April 24, 2018, I was shocked when I was informed that Joseph DeAngelo was arrested in Sacramento and would be facing 13 murder charges, including my dad's. I truly never thought I'd live to see that day, but unfortunately, my mom did not. We are all so relieved and thankful for the perseverance of so many people who did not give up trying to solve this case. I would like to thank the Tulare County District Attorneys, Tim Ward and David Alavezos, and Renee Newman, the Tulare County Victims' Advocate, as well as Detective James Cummings of the Visalia Police Department, for keeping me informed and guiding me through these past 2 years. You have helped me deal with all this more than you know!

Next month on September 11th, it will be 45 years since my dad was taken from us. He was only 45 years old at the time, in the prime of his life. I was not able to have him walk me down the aisle when I got married, and our children were never able to know him. He would have been a wonderful grandpa! What sickens and angers me the most is that DeAngelo was able to live a normal life with his family for all those years, while my family and I could not be with my dad. I am so thankful that he will at least spend the rest of his miserable life in prison.

Victim Impact Statement: Lori Mendonca

For: Officer William McGowen

Good Morning,

Thank you, your Honor, and Tulare County District Attorney for allowing our family to participate in this court proceeding today.

My Name is Lori Mendonca, I am the daughter of William McGowen, former Detective with Visalia Police Department. I am speaking today for my dad, who passed away 15 years ago, and the rest of the McGowen family.

First, we would like to express our deepest sympathy and condolences to the other victims and their families who suffered unspeakable loss, pain and violence at the hand of defendant.

Of all the victims of Mr. DeAngelo, we are probably one of the least affected, but that does not mean that his crimes did not have a lasting impact on my father and family.

In reference to the shooting that occurred Dec. 10, 1975

As the evidence of the crimes committed by the defendant were released, it became apparent that the defendant fully intended to kill my father the night of Dec. 10, 1975. My dad had always held his flashlight up and out to the side of his head, the night of the shooting was a dark winter night, when approached by my dad, the defendant fired at the light and the bullet hit the flashlight instead of his intended target. By the grace of God, dad was only slightly injured, by metal chards spraying his eye and face. Had the shot been mere inches to the left it could have been a far different outcome resulting in severe injury or even death.

Because he is unable to speak for himself, I would like for the defendant and court to know that my dad's investigation and police work was correct on several issues:

- He had seen the defendant before, he was certain of this.
- The defendant was military.
- That the Visalia Ransacker and the East Area Rapist, were the same person.
- The crimes would escalate, from prowling and burglary to assaults that are more violent.

How did the defendant's crimes affect my father?

- My father felt personal responsibility to solving the case for the Snelling family, he knew Mr. Snelling from COS.
- He believed that the case, could be solved if agencies worked together and shared information.
- There were negative comments and newspaper articles written questioning the Visalia Police Departments and my father's motives for trying to share information with other agencies.
- He never stopped looking for the Ransacker, every person he saw that resembled the composite he would check out. It was always in the back of his mind.

- After dad retired officers continued to contact him for information about the case, again it was something he wanted to solve.

How did the crime affect my family?

Dad was obsessive about safety:

- He placed dead bolts on all of our doors,
- Wooden dowels in our windows, he detested sliding glass doors
- We were never allowed to sleep with our windows open
- He built wooden barriers and put them up in front of my brothers and my bedroom windows
- We got a big dog.
- He never traveled without his weapon
- He was always on guard and suspicious of people
- He meticulously checked doors and windows every night.

In closing:

The day the defendant was arrested, will forever be etched in our mind; this is something we never thought would happen. Justice, will now be served for his numerous victims and their families, but it does not replace the anguish, fear and enormous pain caused by his actions and crimes, he lived a full life, that he denied to so many.

I want to thank my dad, for always protecting me and keeping me safe. My dad was an excellent Police Officer.

Thank you to the Tulare County District Attorney for including our family in these proceedings and thank you all of the Law Enforcement Officers and other agencies that worked together to solve these horrific crimes.