

# Frese gets 97 years in Hartman killing

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Staff Writer

The first of four people convicted in the beating death of 15-year-old John Hartman was sentenced to 97 years in prison Monday.

Barring an early parole, 20-year-old George Frese will get out of prison in 2077. The judge suspended 20 years of the sentence.

After his attorney helped the shackled client unfold a prepared statement, Frese told Judge Niesje Steinkruger that the justice system is corrupt and the media fabricated the truth. He cried as he spoke of his appreciation for the support of those who believe he's been wrongfully ac-

cused.

"I will be redeemed," he said shortly before Steinkruger read his sentence.

Frese, along with Marvin Roberts, Kevin Pease and Eugene Vent, was convicted of robbing, sexually assaulting and murdering Hartman at Ninth Avenue and Barnette Street in October of 1997.

Steinkruger said it would be up to the Department of Corrections if or when Frese gets paroled.

She said there was no hope for rehabilitation, in part because Frese has shown no remorse, as she detailed his violent history, which she said escalated in de-

gree and in number of occurrences.

"They were a group of young men out looking to hurt people," the judge said. "There was violence for fun. There was violence for a thrill. There was violence for personal satisfaction."

Steinkruger described Frese as less than a model prisoner, detailing a number of incidents Frese has been penalized for during his incarceration.

A quiet but pleased murmur of the word "yes" and a short out-



**FRESE**

burst of clapping was the only noise in the courtroom as the judge announced the sentence.

More than 50 people attended the hearing. A couple of them bowed their heads occasionally in what looked like prayer.

Frese's parents were present but declined comment. Other spectators repeated "it's not over," after the judge concluded the hearing, countering cheers from supporters of Hartman's mother, Evalyn Thomas.

Frese's attorney, Bob Downes, said Frese plans to appeal both the sentencing and the conviction.

Downes had asked the judge  
**See FRESE, Page A-6**



Eric Engman/News-Miner

**REACTION**—John Hartman's mother, Evalyn Thomas, is comforted by friend Dave Fink after George Frese's sentence was read Monday. Frese was one of four men convicted in the 1997 murder of Hartman.

## FRESE: Sentenced to 97 years

Continued from Page A-1

for a sentence of 30 years, painting a pattern of violent murders where those convicted have received less than the maximum sentence of 99 years.

"If you put him in jail for 30 years ... he's going to be significantly older and significantly wiser and therefore no longer a danger," he said.

Christine Hopkins, Hartman's

girlfriend, said after the hearing that the sentence could never be long enough.

Frese's part in the Hartman murder lead to his conviction in another violent incident in which he was found guilty of brandishing a gun and threatening tourists at the Westmark Hotel.

Frese left the scene before police arrived but later the tourists recognized his picture in the

paper in stories related to the Hartman murder and notified police, the judge told courtroom spectators in a recap of the incident.

Frese refused to sign court documents and submit to fingerprinting at his sentencing. A short ruckus outside the courthouse followed the hearing.

"I'm happy he's not going to hurt nobody else. ... We've still got three more," Thomas said.