

Triple murder shocks city; son arrested

By Ed Galucki

Heath Stocks, 20, of Furlow, admitted to investigators that late Friday night, Jan. 17, he killed his mother, father and sister at their rural Furlow home, according to court documents.

The admission was noted in an affidavit by Mark A. Hollingsworth, an investigator with the Arkansas State Police, that accompanied the capital murder charges filed by Lonoke County prosecuting attorney Larry Cook.

Stocks is the son of Joe C. Stocks, 46, and Barbara Stocks, 43, and brother of Heather Stocks, 18, who were all killed at their Johnson Road home at Furlow, about 10 miles northwest of Lonoke.

Within a day of the deaths, Heath Stocks was taken into custody as a suspect.

The arrest on capital murder charges was announced at a press conference at the Lonoke County Courthouse on Sunday.

Cook said that conviction of capital murder carries penalties of either death or imprisonment without parole, but he did not say which penalty would be sought. "Today is not the proper time...to make a public statement concerning that," he said.

Sunday's conference provided few new details of the crime or what led investigators to suspect the Stocks' son.

Lt. John Morrow from the Arkansas State Police, commander of Company A of the Criminal Investigations Division at Little Rock, had said at a press conference on Saturday at 2:30 p.m. that leads were being followed but declined to say if there was a suspect.

Heath Stocks was not mentioned by name and was noted only as a family member who was not home at the time and had been found in Arkadelphia.

Stocks is a former student at Henderson State University and had friends in Arkadelphia.

911 CALL

According to court documents, Heather Stocks had made a 911 call reporting a fictitious burglary after

Murder

Continued from Page 1

she came home and discovered Heath Stocks ransacking the home.

In the affidavit, Heath said Heather made the call to cover up his actions.

The statement goes on to say that the shootings happened after Joe Stocks came into the residence and confronted Heath Stocks.

Morrow said Saturday that the bodies were discovered because of a 911 "hang-up" late Friday evening.

"The [911] call came in at 10:40 p.m.," Morrow said, "but no one was on the line."

Neither was the phone answered when the 911 dispatcher tried to call back, he said.

A sheriff's deputy, sent to investigate, found the bodies about 11 p.m.

Authorities had found evidence of forced entry through the garage door. The family had attended a basketball game at Lonoke High School Friday night.

Initial reports did not state how the family had died.

On Sunday, Morrow confirmed that the victims had died from gunshot wounds, but declined to say how many times or in what manner each had been shot.

He did say the bodies were found "in the central area, in the kitchen."

He also said no other suspects were being sought, but he would not say what led investigators to suspect Heath Stocks.

PISTOL FOUND

On Sunday, Morrow said that none of the guns in the house was

thought to be missing.

However, court documents state that a .45 caliber semi-automatic pistol owned by Joe Stocks could not be located in the residence, and that two .45 caliber shells were found in the kitchen where the bodies were found.

Hollingsworth said in his affidavit that Heath Stocks told of where a pistol and other items were at in Arkadelphia.

Morrow said on Sunday that a pistol had been recovered from the Ouachita River at Arkadelphia.

He would not say that it was the murder weapon, only that tests were to be run "to see if it is even connected with this [crime]."

"There were signs that the house had been ransacked," Morrow said Sunday. He added that determining if anything was taken was difficult since the family, who would know if something was missing, "is deceased at this time."

"We just suspect items are missing," he said Sunday. "We don't have an exact count on things."

COMMUNITY RESPONDS
Jackie Moore, a member of Con-

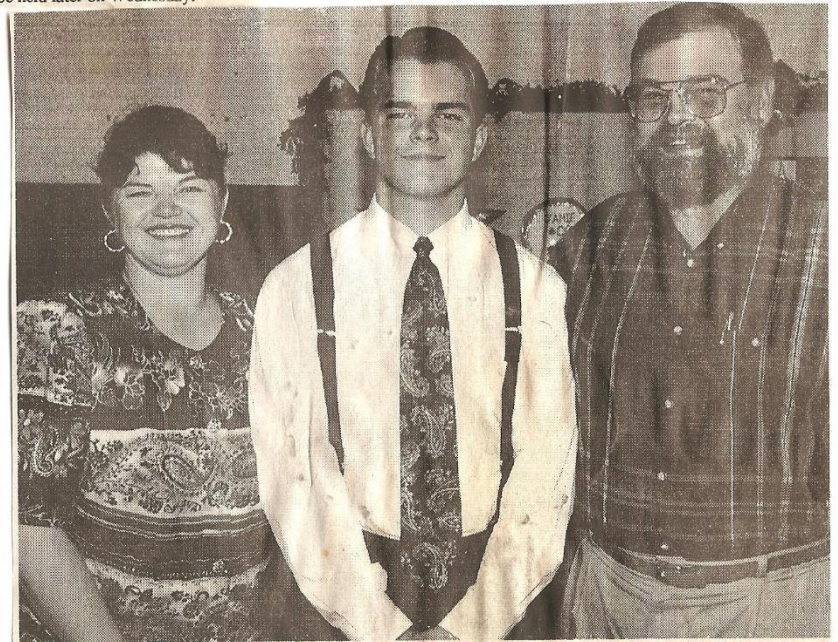
cord United Methodist Church at Furlow, said that crisis teams from throughout central Arkansas have been using the church as a central place to be available to help area students cope with the tragedy. Heather Stocks was well-known and popular at Lonoke High School.

On Sunday, many of the students tied purple ribbons on trees at the high school campus as memorials.

A public memorial service was to be held at the Lonoke High School Gym on Wednesday, Jan. 22.

"This will be to celebrate the lives of Joe, Barbara and Heather Stocks," the Rev. Bob Marble said on Monday.

Marble said that a private service, limited to family and friends, would be held later on Wednesday.



Barbara, Heath and Joe Stocks in a recent photo taken at their home in Furlow.