

JUDGE REFUSES BAIL REDUCTION

Lawyer: Accused killer has history of dementia

By Peggy Wright
Staff Writer

The 75-year-old man charged with killing his wife last Thursday with a baseball bat at their Chester Township home has a recent history of dementia and mental illness that is well-documented, his lawyer told a judge Monday.

Arguing at a bail hearing before Superior Court Judge David Ironson in Morristown, attorney James Porfido said murder suspect Leo Moran Sr. has the support of family members, who are dealing with the killing of Char-

lotte Moran, 74, but recognize Leo Moran has dementia.

"I do disagree this is a murder," Porfido told the judge. But Ironson refused to budge from the \$1 million bail he set last week when Moran, a retired union carpenter, was charged with attacking his wife of 54 years with a baseball bat.

"There's an issue of whether he was of sound mind" when the killing occurred, Porfido told the judge.

Moran's son, Leo, was in court for the hearing, along with two women and another man.

"They know he suffers from mental illness that has been ongoing and systemic for months," Porfido said. "He was married for 54 years with no evidence of any type of domestic violence.

Porfido unsuccessfully asked for bail to be lowered to \$250,000 but the judge maintained bail at \$1 million cash at the request of Morris County Assistant Prosecutor Brian DiGiacomo.

The bail review was conducted through a video camera link between the county jail and the courtroom.

Moran Sr. called his

daughter-in-law to his home on Pleasant Hill Road in Chester Township early Thursday morning and she discovered Charlotte Moran's body in a hallway next to a bedroom. Leo Moran was home and told police he suspected his wife was having an affair and that she threatened to leave him if he didn't follow orders from his doctors.

According to an arrest affidavit, Moran's son had taken him to St. Clares Hospital on Wednesday for a screening and consultation and back at home and he told police he believed his wife and son

were conspiring against him.

He allegedly told police that his wife attacked him first with the bat and that he got control of it and beat her with it. The affidavit notes that police are suspicious of Moran's version of events because a large pool of blood was found on the victim's bed, suggesting she was lying down when attacked. He also changed his clothes after the alleged homicide, the affidavit said.

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