

Lazaros Hajistassi jailed for stabbing murder

A PROTECTIVE son who murdered his mother's abusive ex-boyfriend, then bragged it was like "a knife going through butter", will spend at least 20 years in jail.

In sentencing today, Supreme Court Justice Margaret Nyland said 27-year-old Lazaros Hajistassi had been taught from an early age to protect his Greek mother.

She said Hajistassi became "angry and enraged" when his mother told him that her ex-partner, Vincent Farquhar, 47, had punched and kicked her during previous violent disputes, and she had decided to leave him.

Hajistassi "shrugged and looked

bewildered" before he went inside the house and confronted Mr Farquhar in June 2008.

Hajistassi stabbed Mr Farquhar five times in his neck, back and chest with a 20cm kitchen knife.

The fatal wound entered the left ventricle of his heart, broke a rib and caused his lung to collapse.

When giving evidence during his trial, Hajistassi said Mr Farquhar had caused a serious injury to his head and had dug his fingers into his eyeballs.

In July, a Supreme Court jury took two and a half hours to convict him of murder despite Hajistassi's claims of self-defence.

Justice Nyland said Hajistassi was at fault for Mr Farquhar's "tragic and dis-

astrous" death.

"Hajistassi made a clear and conscious decision to introduce a knife into what was clearly a violent situation," Justice Nyland said.

She said Hajistassi saw himself as his "mother's protector".

Justice Nyland said that while Mr Farquhar's behavior "substantially mitigated" Hajistassi's offending, a lower than usual non-parole period was not justified.

She said that after the fight Hajistassi had ran next door and called an ambulance for himself and it was not until further investigation that Mr Farquhar's body was found.

She sentenced him to life imprisonment with a non-parole period of 20

years.

Outside court, members of Farquhar's family said they were "very happy" with the result.

During his trial, the court heard transcripts of a telephone call made by Hajistassi.

"I went into the lounge room and said 'you hit my mum, you f--k,'" the transcript reads.

"I expected him to apologise but he just got up and cracked me right in the face . . . I watched him die, my whole body was just covered in blood.

"I stabbed him to death, bro - it felt like a knife going through butter hey, you should have seen how big the knife was, biggest in the house."

Article from Adelaidenow



World's longest tusks

A fossil mastodon tusk found in the northern Greek region of Grevena was officially entered into the Guinness Book of Records on Saturday as the longest ever found.

Truly mammoth at 5.02 metres in length, the pair of tusks dates back three million years and belongs to the extinct mastodon species *Mammuth borsoni*. The previous record for the world's longest tusk was also held by a tusk found in the Grevena region in 1997, with a length of 4.39 metres.

In a special event at the Milia Natural History Museum, where the tusks and other paleontological finds discovered in a local dig are on display, the Guinness Book of Records also awarded the museum and Grevena local authorities for their contribution to the work being carried out by Thessaloniki University's Geology Department.

After receiving the prize, Grevena prefect Dimosthenis Kouptsidis outlined plans for a modern Paleontology Centre in the Milia area, at a site near the excavation area.

Caption: File photograph of the two record-breaking mastodon tusks found by palaeontologists at Milia, in the Grevena region of northern Greece.

Helen Zerefos portrait hits right note

SHOW business people such as award-winning soprano Helen Zerefos tend to take good causes in their stride.

So being asked to sing at the Royal Arts Society Christmas exhibition last year was nothing out of the ordinary.

Except that she attracted the attention of portrait artist Judith O'Conal-Prinz.

"This lady kept looking at me and then finally asked me if I did anything in the community," Ms Zerefos said.

It turned out O'Conal-Prinz was looking for a subject for the *Unsung Heroes* exhibition which just opened at Parliament House Canberra.

And it just so happened that Ms Zerefos of Sylvania fitted the criteria perfectly.

After 12 sittings, Ms Zerefos, the compassionate unsung hero and theatrical diva, emerged from the canvas.

The diva is wearing a Velazquez-inspired gown she designed herself, and is a tribute to her career as a stage and recording artist.

The compassion captured by the artist refers to Ms Zerefos's dedication to various causes, such as the



A painting that praises: Artist Judith O'Conal-Prinz (left) and her subject, Helen Zerefos.

Ageing Research Centre, but especially to her many years of caring for family members. When she was at the height of her career, with lots of work in Australia and the prospect of going overseas, Ms Zerefos's widowed mother got Alzheimer's disease and required total care.

"I looked after her for 10 years until the doctor said she was now totally helpless and needed two people to lift her, but I went to

see her every day," Ms Zerefos said.

"I chose to do it but it was very, very hard. Music was my saviour. I would accept local jobs, usually during the day, and put on one of my costumes and go on stage."

After her mother died, Ms Zerefos's husband Raymond was diagnosed with cancer, and for the last two years of his life she was also his primary carer.

Then her sister developed cancer, and although she wasn't the primary carer, she helped out where she could.

"There were 20 years of caring," Ms Zerefos said. "It stopped five years ago when my sister died. I wish it was different, but it wasn't different. It was just life." *Unsung Heroes* can be seen at Parliament House Canberra until September 29.

Article from The Leader