



# Genesee County Prosecutor's Office

## David Leyton, Prosecutor



### Man Pleads Guilty to Murder of East Side Flint Store Owner

February 27, 2007

**FLINT** -- A Mexican national pleaded guilty today for the murder and armed robbery of east side Flint specialty store owner, Helen Gonzales, reported Genesee County Prosecutor David Leyton.

Edgar A. DeLeon-Puentes, 22, bludgeoned Gonzalez to death with a hammer on March 24, 2005 as she was assisting him with looking at some store merchandise. Gonzales, 74, owned Helen's Records and Gifts on N. Franklin Avenue on Flint's eastside and was an admired part of Flint's Hispanic community.

Originally charged with premeditated murder, DeLeon-Puentes agreed to plead to second degree murder which carries a maximum sentence of life in prison. As part of DeLeon-Puentes' plea to second degree murder, Prosecutor Leyton required that the minimum sentencing guidelines imposed by law be exceeded by the Court due to the substantial and compelling brutality in this case. In addition, Prosecutor Leyton demanded that if DeLeon-Puentes were to survive his prison sentence he be immediately deported back to Mexico. The expected minimum sentence to be imposed by the Court on March 30th is 40-60 years.

The case was delayed in the court system over the past two years for a number of reasons including serious health issues with DeLeon-Puentes' original defense attorney and language barrier issues throughout the process.

"Today, justice was done when Edgar DeLeon-Puentes plead guilty to the murder of Helen Gonzales," said Prosecutor Leyton. "Helen was more than an individual who owned a neighborhood shop. She was a proud representative for a whole community in Flint and Genesee County."

"Although today's events can never fill the void left by the death of Helen Gonzales, hopefully it can help bring a sense of closure in certain respects for her family and friends and the entire community of Flint. I am confident that her spirit and memory will continue on in rich tradition by all those who knew and loved her," he said.

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