

Professor's studies play part in Supreme Court ruling

By Laurie Schwartz

Of the Emerald

A University professor played a part in a recent decision by the U.S. Supreme Court.

Assistant psychology Professor Robert Mauro's study on racism and the death penalty was one of three statistical studies cited in the recent death penalty decision.

The court on April 22 rejected a constitutional challenge to the death penalty based on statistics showing racial disparities in sentencing.

The study, which Mauro co-authored while he was a graduate student and instructor at Stanford University, examined statistics from 17,000 homicides in eight states. The study found that in all eight states the death penalty was more likely to be administered in cases where the victim was white rather than black.

Mauro's study found that in Georgia, where the Supreme Court case originated, homicide cases with white victims were nine times more likely to

result in death penalty sentences than cases with black victims.

Before becoming involved in the research, Mauro said he "was vaguely pro-death penalty (but) not seriously involved in the issue at all." He joined the psychology department here in 1984.

Samuel Gross, the study's co-author, initially drew Mauro into the study as a statistical consultant.

After he researched the issue and read other studies on the death penalty, Mauro became opposed to it.

There isn't any evidence that the death penalty has more of a deterrent effect on criminals than life imprisonment, he said.

His study indicates that the racial effects in capital sentencing are "huge and they appear all over the place, not just in a few states, although they were strongest in a couple."

The Supreme Court's ruling accepted the statistical studies as valid, but ruled that a defendant must prove racism occurred in individual cases.

"The ruling, in a nutshell, is that the

death penalty is unfair, and they (the court justices) are not concerned with that as long as you can't prove deliberate discrimination in particular cases," Mauro explained.

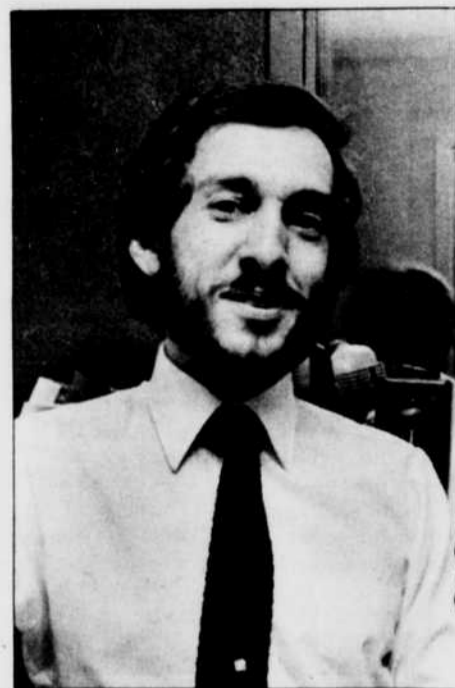
That approach is in serious conflict with all sorts of discrimination laws in other areas such as housing, he said.

Mauro also is interested in psychological and sociological explanations for the discrimination the statistics reveal.


Some theories are:

- Prosecutors may vary the seriousness of their charges in cases involving black victims compared to cases with white victims.
- Police may not have as many resources to get evidence in black communities as in white communities.
- Jurors, who are predominantly white, may identify with white victims more than black victims.

Mauro currently is doing studies with mock juries here at the University to test this last theory.



Robert Mauro



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EMU Board cuts budget

By Carolyn Lamberson

Of the Emerald

The EMU board of directors cut \$21,418 from its budget Wednesday to match the level established by the Incidental Fee Committee.

The board asked the IFC for a 6.6 percent increase, but the committee gave it only a 5 percent increase at a hearing earlier this month.

Karen Gaffney, EMU Board chairwoman, expressed concern that the money might be difficult to find.

"As those of you involved in the budget process know, we went over these budgets with a fine-tooth comb," she said, addressing the board. "I don't think that there is a lot of fat in our programs."

She also raised the question of two staff positions that were included in the budget after an emergency board meeting. The positions, one in the Outdoor Program and the other in Club Sports, were originally intended to be placed on the ballot with positions for the ASUO Child Care program.

But the IFC placed only the

child care positions on the ballot, leaving the board to work the other positions back into the budget.

EMU Director Adell McMillan suggested a solution. The board recently received its billing for insurance, and instead of being close to \$30,000, insurance will be closer to \$20,000. She suggested eliminating the \$11,000 position from the Outdoor Program budget and reducing the insurance line item.

This way, the Club Sports program could have its position (for a part-time secretary) at \$2,300, and the EMU would still be within its budget.

Board member Matt Smith, who has been arguing for the Outdoor Program this year, was concerned that Club Sports was getting its position because it cost less than the Outdoor Program position.

McMillan said she didn't know where the board would find \$11,000.

"Twenty-three hundred dollars is all we've got," she said.

The final vote was 7-0-1, with Larry Johnson abstaining.

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