

By Keith Lacey

Delphine Adamson was described by her family and loved ones as a caring and doting mother and grandmother.

The mother of 10, age 62, was bludgeoned to death with an axe by her husband Michael Adamson, now age 24, in a cabin they owned in the bush near Chelmsford Jan. 29, 2001.

Adamson pleaded guilty to second-degree murder last week and was given a life sentence with no eligibility of parole for 10 years.

The deceased's niece and goddaughter Wendy Ricketts was in court and told Justice Ian Gordon Adamson's brutal murder has devastated her life and many others.

"Every time the phone rings, my heart skips a beat hoping it will be Aunt Del, but I know it won't be," she said in a calm, hushed voice. "Mike (the accused) has taken away any future memories from me I would have had with my aunt."

When she thinks of her aunt's final few moments alive it devastates her, she said. "I miss her so much at times I can't breathe," she said.

Her aunt was a "wonderful, giving woman" who gained love and respect from everyone who knew her well, she said.

"I'm just glad justice will be served on behalf of my precious aunt," she said.

Parts of numerous other victim impact statements were also read to the court.

One of Adamson's brothers wrote her death "has emotionally scarred each of us...and we are totally crushed by her senseless death, and we hope justice prevails."

One of Adamson's sons-in-law wrote her death has caused tremendous grief and strain throughout their large family. Moments of anger, frustration and fear regularly appear not only over how she

Murder victim's family detail grief, sorrow and anger

died, but also because all those who loved her will never have any change to tell her how much they loved her.

One of Adamson's sons wrote his mother "was a proud and doting grandmother" and how his children will miss out on her being present at their graduations, marriages and raising their own families.

"The sadness and anger are at times overwhelming," he said. "The actions of Michael Adamson are far-reaching."

A daughter wrote "Mom I love you with all my being."

Gordon accepted a joint submission and ordered the life sentence, but noted Adamson will likely be denied parole after 10 years considering his 1997 conviction for using a firearm during a robbery. Adamson was given a 25-month penitentiary term for that crime.

Adamson didn't report his wife missing from the time he killed her on Jan. 29, 1999 until her body was discovered last May.

Court heard police were called after a dog owned by the Adamsons recovered a hand. They discovered the deceased's body in a shallow grave about 50 metres from the cabin the couple owned in the bush near Chelmsford.

When confronted by police about his missing wife, Adamson initially lied, and continued to spend his wife's money and drive her truck, said Gordon.

The plea of guilt, however, does signify remorse and spared a long, painful trial for many family members as this was a senseless, brutal crime, said the judge.

Defence counsel Donald Plaunt told the court he pleaded with his client to plead not guilty as there were many triable issues, but Adamson "is awash in anguish over the events" and wouldn't heed his advice "and wanted to come out in the open and accept responsibility" for his actions.

Adamson comes from a dysfunctional family and turned to alcohol at age 12 and drugs at age 15 to bury his pain, but he still managed to do well in school through Grade 11, he said.

When he met his wife, they shared a common bond of loving nature and wanting to spend time in the woods, he said.

Initially, she didn't want him to work, but money problems surfaced "and as is often the case, money became a central issue" in their marriage, said Plaunt.

Assistant Crown attorney Alex Kurke said Adamson's murder was not only brutally violent, but she leaves behind so many loved ones who are left with feelings of anger, bitterness and frustration at not having a chance to say goodbye.

She was left in a shallow grave and suffered the indignity of having her own beloved dog find her, he said. The accused not only kept spending her money after her death, but continued to drive her truck and lie to many people, he said.

The only mitigating factor in Adamson's favour is his plea of guilt, which saved a long, difficult trial and allows the family to fully begin the grieving process, he said.