

**VICTIM'S IMPACT STATEMENT**  
**OF**  
**ELIZABETH SNELLING HUPP**

Your Honor,

My name is Elizabeth Snelling Hupp, and I would like to talk to you about my father, Claude Snelling, who saved my life when I was just 16 years old. On September 10, 1975, I went to bed like any other night without a care in the world. A few hours later, my world was turned upside down. I was awakened by an intruder, Joseph DeAngelo, who was wearing a ski mask and pointing a gun at me, saying that he was taking me with him and that if I made any noise, he would kill me. My father must have heard me crying and woke up. DeAngelo had taken me out of the house out the back door and through the gate that separated our backyard from the car port and driveway. When we were under the car port, I heard my dad yell something and saw him pause in the kitchen for just a moment before he charged out of the house through the back door near us. DeAngelo fired 2 shots, hitting my dad. He then turned the gun on me as I was down on the ground. My only thought was, "This is it" and put my head down, expecting him to kill me. Instead, he started kicking me in the head and face, then ran off down the driveway. I ran back into the house to find my dad had collapsed at the front door and my mom hovering over him. I know in my heart that he was still trying to save me by going through the front door and cutting him off in the front yard. But he never got that far. My dad lay at the front door, bleeding to death, and ended up dying on the way to the hospital. I truly believe that if anything had happened to me that night and he couldn't save me, that would have killed him. My dad was such a gentle soul and loving, kind-hearted man. My mom always said he was such a big softie! My dad died saving my life that night and is my hero!

My dad and I were always very close, and I loved him so much!! We loved to go hiking in the mountains together, and we had some great talks. He was such a great dad, was never judgmental and wouldn't preach to me. Instead, through talking about a situation I was dealing with, whether it was school, friends, or boys, he would help me figure things out on my own. My mom and dad both had a very strong faith in God, and we were always very active in the church. My dad taught Sunday School and Bible studies, and he was an usher and deacon. However, his faith did not end at the church doors – it filled every part of his personal life, with his family and friends, and his professional life as a journalism professor at College of the Sequoias with his colleagues and students. I believe he absolutely loved every aspect of his life!

Our strong faith in God is what helped my mom and me and my brothers get through the tough years following my dad's death. We somehow managed to stay in the same house, but with added security. I slept in my mom's room for the next year, because I was too afraid to sleep in my bedroom and be by myself. Knowing that my dad's murderer was never caught and was still out there somewhere left us all feeling very vulnerable.

Eventually with God's help and the love and support of our family, friends, and our church family, our fear and grief lessened with time, and we started getting on with our lives. My mom never worried that the murderer was not caught. She always said he would face judgment from God eventually and turned it over to Him. I started to believe that myself as well and didn't want to waste my life worrying that he was out there and could come back.

On April 24, 2018, I was shocked when I was informed that Joseph DeAngelo was arrested in Sacramento and would be facing 13 murder charges, including my dad's. I truly never thought I'd live to see that day, but unfortunately, my mom did not. We are all so relieved and thankful for the perseverance of so many people who did not give up trying to solve this case. I would like to thank the Tulare County District Attorneys, Tim Ward and David Alavezos, and Renee Newman, the Tulare County Victims' Advocate, as well as Detective James Cummings of the Visalia Police Department, for keeping me informed and guiding me through these past 2 years. You have helped me deal with all this more than you know!

Next month on September 11<sup>th</sup>, it will be 45 years since my dad was taken from us. He was only 45 years old at the time, in the prime of his life. I was not able to have him walk me down the aisle when I got married, and our children were never able to know him. He would have been a wonderful grandpa! What sickens and angers me the most is that DeAngelo was able to live a normal life with his family for all those years, while my family and I could not be with my dad. I am so thankful that he will at least spend the rest of his miserable life in prison.