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NEWS ADVISORY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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District Attorney holds first in-person jury trial since the COVID-19 pandemic hit Hidalgo County

EDINBURG – Following a yearlong moratorium of in-person trials because of COVID-19, the Hidalgo County Criminal District Attorney's Office prosecuted its first in-person jury trial, securing a murder conviction.

"We are very pleased that we were able to hold our first jury trial since COVID and we want to move forward in dispensing justice for the victims and their families," said Hidalgo County Criminal District Attorney Ricardo Rodriguez Jr.

Felony Division Assistant District Attorneys Jay Garza and Vance Gonzales prosecuted the case as Victims Unit Advocate Selina Sandoval assisted the victim's family in navigating through the judicial process.

Prosecutors secured a conviction involving the murder of Mercedes resident Armando Torres, 16, who left his home last September 28, 2020 and was attacked by the defendant who was later arrested by the Mercedes Police Department.

"We appreciate the thorough and diligent work done by the arresting officers," said Rodriguez.

The in-person trial of Fidencio Castillo Cosme, began with jury selection on July 13. Jurors found the defendant guilty of Murder, 1st Degree Felony on July 21 and assessed a punishment of 85 years in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Institutional Division the following day. Judge Noe Gonzalez sentenced the defendant on the same date.

"I would like to congratulate Felony Division Assistant District Attorneys Vance Gonzales and Jay Garza for their hard work, commitment and passion in bringing justice," said Rodriguez. "This trial, like all others, involves an approach that is not about winning or losing, it is about bringing justice for all, justice for the victims, their family members and citizens of Hidalgo County. We are also very pleased with the jury for stepping up to the forefront and successfully fulfilling their civic responsibility."

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