

NEWS RELEASE

DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

Commissioner Terra Taylor

Presented by Jason Miller Office of the Commissioner, Community Relations Officer

245 McKee Road | Dover, DE 19904 | Office: 302.857.5440 | Jason.miller@delaware.gov

DOC announces inmate death

Smyrna, DE – The Delaware Department of Correction (DOC) today announced the unrelated deaths of two inmates from James T. Vaughn Correctional Center (JTVCC) in Smyrna.

Eugene Hickernell, age 95, was being housed in the prison infirmary where he was receiving hospice care for serious chronic health conditions. Hickernell was found unresponsive and not breathing in his infirmary bed at approximately 8:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 27 and he was pronounced dead by Kent County Paramedics at 8:29 p.m. on April 27. His body was turned over to the Division of Forensic Science to determine cause of death. Hickernell, of Millville, DE, had been in DOC custody since 2008 and was serving a 20-year sentence for 1 count of 3rd Degree Rape with victim under 16 years of age and 1 count of 3rd Degree Rape with age more than 10 years older than the victim.

Warren Chapman, age 53, was found unresponsive in his cell at approximately 4:00 p.m. on Sunday, April 27. A medical alert was issued and life-saving measures were immediately initiated by facility medical staff. Emergency Medical Services Paramedics arrived, continued life-saving measures, and initiated transport to Bayhealth Hospital, Kent Campus. Continued lifesaving measures were unsuccessful, and Chapman was pronounced dead at 1:33 a.m. on Monday, April 28. His body was turned over to the Division of Forensic Science to determine cause of death. Delaware State Police were contacted and responded to JTVCC to conduct an independent death investigation. Chapman, of Dover, DE had been in DOC custody since 1999 and was serving a sentence of life plus 139 years for 6 Counts of 1st Degree Unlawful Sexual Intercourse, 1 Count of 1st Degree Rape with a victim under 12 years of age, 3 Counts of Attempted Unlawful Sexual Intercourse, 1 Count of Continuous Sexual Abuse, and 4 Counts of 2nd Degree Unlawful Sexual Contact.

If you are a crime victim in need of assistance, you are encouraged to call DOC Victim Services at 302-857-5440.

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