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NEWS RELEASE

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MODESTO, CALIFORNIA – Stanislaus County District Attorney James Brazelton announced today that Miguel Angel Zavala Vigas, age 20, a Mexican national, was sentenced today to life imprisonment without the possibility of parole plus an additional sentence of 25 years to life. Vigas was convicted of first degree murder along with a special circumstance of murder during the commission of a robbery by a jury in March of this year. The jury also found Vigas guilty of using a handgun in the slaying of victim Regino Abundis of Mantecal. Deputy District Attorneys Dawna Frenchie and Rob Taro prosecuted the case for the People.

At the beginning of the hearing before the Honorable John Whiteside, a defense motion for a new trial was denied. Whiteside subsequently sentenced Vigas to the maximum sentence for first degree murder with a special circumstance of robbery. That sentence guarantees Vigas will serve out the remainder of his life in the California Department of Corrections without the possibility of parole. In addition to that sentence Whiteside imposed an additional 25 years to life, to run consecutively to the initial sentence. The additional time was for the killing by using a gun under California's 10-20-Life Gun law. During the sentencing hearing the mother of the victim gave a poignant statement to Whiteside stating how much his three children miss their father.

The case arose out of events which occurred on April 18th 2002 in the county of Stanislaus at a home at the intersection of Keyes Road and Pioneer. Three men, including the decedent, went to that home and were robbed at gun point. The victims were bound and blindfolded with duct tape. During that robbery Vigas shot Abundis in the back as he was running away. Vigas was one of nine defendants charged with murder. Six defendants still await their trial dates.