

PARALYZED OFFICER FORGIVES TEEN-AGE ASSAILANT

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A New York City police officer, Steven McDonald, paralyzed from the neck down and breathing with the aid of a respirator, expressed pity and forgiveness yesterday for the teen-ager who shot him in Central Park nine months ago.

Officer McDonald's statement was read by his wife, Patricia McDonald, at an emotional news conference that followed the baptism of the couple's first child, Conor Patrick McDonald, at the Roman Catholic chapel in the Bellevue Hospital Administration Building. The ceremony was conducted by John Cardinal O'Connor and was attended by Mayor Koch, the actress Maureen O'Hara and about 300 other well-wishers.

"On some days, when I am not feeling very well, I can get angry," Mrs. McDonald said, reading a letter from her husband to the people of New York City. "But I have realized that anger is a wasted emotion, and that I have to remember why I became a police officer."

"I'm sometimes angry at the teen-age boy who shot me," she added, her voice quavering. "But more often I feel sorry for him. I only hope that he can turn his life into helping and not hurting people. I forgive him and hope that he can find peace and purpose in his life."

Officer McDonald, who turned 30 years old yesterday and is a resident of Malverne, L.I., was shot in the neck last July while trying to prevent a robbery at the north end of Central Park. The shooting attracted widespread publicity because the victim's father and grandfather had been members of the New York City Police Department, and because the assailant, Shavod Jones, was 15 years old at the time.

The youth was convicted of attempted murder last December and was sentenced to three and a third to 10 years in prison, the maximum for a juvenile offender. Two accomplices, 13 and 14 years old when the attack occurred, were convicted in Family Court of assault and conspiracy; each was sentenced to three years in a juvenile home.

The shooting also attracted a telephone call to Officer McDonald from President Reagan in September and an outpouring of financial as well as emotional support. The businessman and philanthropist Milton J. Petrie, for example, has set up a \$20,000-a-year trust fund to benefit the injured police officer and has set aside \$100,000 for the college education of Mr. McDonald's son, born last month and named after a character in Leon Uris's book "Trinity."

Photo of Conor Partick McDonald's baptism (NYT/Chester Higgins Jr.)

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