

## ***SPARTANBURG MAN RECEIVES LIFE PRISON SENTENCE FOR MURDER CONVICTION***

A Spartanburg man received a life prison sentence today for stabbing a man to death in a 5-year-old homicide.

Robert Phipps Jr., 49, was found guilty of murder at the conclusion of a four-day jury trial. Phipps is not eligible for parole.

Phipps fatally stabbed Samuel Gossett to death at the victim's South Center Street home in April of 2004. The victim, who was 45-years-old at the time of his death, died as a result of multiple stab wounds to his head, neck and chest area. A broken steak knife was found near the body.

Spartanburg Public Safety investigators arrested Phipps in 2007 after DNA and fingerprint evidence connected Phipps to the crime scene. The defendant's blood was found on the victim's pants.

Phipps testified that someone who answered to the nickname, "New York," committed the murder. No other evidence existed to substantiate the claim.

"I hope today's verdict provides some relief for Mr. Gossett's family," Deputy Solicitor Derrick Balsa said. "Their wait for justice has been a long one."

Balsa partnered with Assistant Solicitor Bryan Kelley to prosecute the case.

Phipps' prior criminal record included convictions for robbery, burglary, theft, drug abuse and bank robbery.

For more information, contact Murray Glenn at 809-4892.