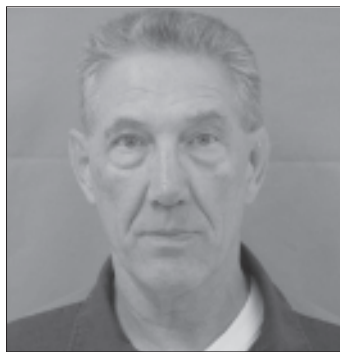


Leslie G. Moran, 149819
Parole eligible since 1986

Psychologists say this former college instructor who has served 28 years for killing his wife presents no risk to the community, but the parole board disagrees.

When Leslie Moran was growing up, his family's life revolved around the Baptist church and the father's ministry. Household rules were strict and Moran felt isolated. At 17, he followed the path of his three older brothers into the military.

When he returned home after four years in the Air Force, Moran enrolled at Michigan State University - Oakland, graduating in 1965. He earned a master's degree in Eastern European history before beginning work as an instructor at Oakland Community College.



Leslie Moran

His first marriage having failed in 1969, Moran married again in 1974. He and his wife, Debbie, appeared to be a successful young couple, taking upscale vacations and buying a home in West Bloomfield. By the second year, though, the marriage was in trouble. In January 1976, the couple began a cycle of separating and reconciling until they separated permanently in July.

Moran, in emotional turmoil over the impending breakup of his second marriage, continued trying to persuade his wife to work at saving it. When she would not, he felt abandoned and inadequate. His life started spinning out of control. Friends

and acquaintances noticed his disheveled appearance and extreme mood swings. The psychologist he began seeing for help found him to be out of touch with reality. She warned Debbie that he could be dangerous to himself or others.

On Sept. 20, 1976, Moran went to a gun shop and purchased a shotgun and a pistol. He pretended to prepare for an out-of-town trip, then called Debbie and persuaded her to take him to the airport on the pretext that his mother in Florida was very ill. His real purpose was to make a final effort to save their failing marriage.

When Debbie arrived, talk about their marriage escalated into a heated argument. Moran showed her the loaded gun and threatened to commit suicide. After 40 minutes, Debbie was determined to leave. Moran grabbed the pistol and shot her several times. He then wandered out into the yard, shaking his head. When a neighbor spoke to him, he said, "Joan, do me a favor. Take me to the police station. I just killed Debbie." Police found Moran sitting on a wooden fence in the yard, the pistol in his jacket pocket. As an officer led him to the patrol car, Moran began sobbing.

In 1977, after a two-week bench trial, Moran was found guilty of second-degree murder and given a life sentence. Moran's trial attorney has stated:

Judge Gilbert clearly understood the difference between 1st and 2nd degree life ... I recall the specific discussion with her...that parole would almost be a certainty in less than 20 years with a good institutional record.

Under today's sentencing guidelines, the recommended minimum sentence would be between 12 and 20 years.

Moran participated in extensive individual and group psychotherapy while in prison. Calling him

No Way Out: Michigan's parole board redefines the meaning of "life"

a situational offender whose crime of passion would be unlikely to be repeated, a psychologist wrote in 1983:

Moran [is] remorseful and has accepted responsibility for the crime ... Prognosis for release seems to be favorable. He would be a good candidate for pre-release on . . . community programs.

The psychologist who conducted Moran's therapy group observed in 1987:

He is clearly not [now] mentally ill [or] a criminal by nature . . . I would like to state clearly that I do not view Les as a threat to the community upon release.

Moran has stayed in contact with family and old friends. All remember him as charming, non-violent and willing to go out of his way to help others. Many have offered to open their homes to him and assist him in his transition to free society.

In 1983, the parole board chair wrote of Moran:

He is a bright, articulate guy who I don't see as a risk, so it's a case of time . . . guideline score [14 years] looks about right to me.

In 1985, the board confirmed Moran's grid score of 14 years, minus one year for excellent behavior. In 1987, when he had been parole-eligible for a year, the full board considered Moran's case but decided he had not served enough time. After interviews in 1992 and 1997, it simply sent him "no interest" notices.

In 2002, the parole board again had no interest. Despite all the prior assessments, the member who interviewed Moran concluded:

P[risoner] says he was emotionally at his end when he killed his wife, has a very difficult

time explaining his actions. I am not satisfied that the risk has been reduced due to insufficient insight into this event.

Moran's next consideration date is in 2007 when he will be 66 years old and will have served 31 years.