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Forgive, Forgive

SU Mourners Told

GILBERT, La. (AP) — They buried Leonard Douglas Brown beside a cotton field in the Mississippi River Delta, three miles from the share-cropper farm where he was born. They blamed his death at Southern University last week on "a sick society" but asked his friends to "forgive and forgive and forgive."

Brown, 20, and another student, Denver A. Smith, 20, of New Roads, La., died of buckshot wounds during a police-student confrontation at the predominantly black school's main campus in Baton Rouge. Thanksgiving Day funeral services were planned for Smith.

"The family begs of you to find room in your heart to forgive and forgive and forgive," Brown's cousin and childhood best friend, Cecil Collins, told some 700 mourners crammed into a little country church with only a 200 seating capacity.

"It's very sad that Doug, a natural but uncommon man, had to be a victim of such circumstances. But all of us live in a sick society that places the value of property far above the value of human life," Collins said.

"It is our wish to make it known, so that we as a family might aid in the cause, to bring about the change that is necessary so that this thing

that has happened will never, ever happen again."

As Collins spoke a female relative became hysterical. She was carried from the church, crying, "I don't want it to happen again! I don't want it to happen again!"

Relatives and family friends in Sunday clothes leaned wedged and perspiring around the walls, or packed into the nursery and Sunday School classrooms. A dozen mourners found standing room inside the baptistry, peering between heads of choir girls at the flower-strewn silver-gray casket. Scores more stood outside in a cold wind.

"It's been a time since we had a funeral like this," said a black deputy sheriff directing traffic down a narrow gravel road leading to the cemetery.

Brown grew up with his mother, four brothers and two sisters on a 100-acre farm, raising cotton, beans and sweet potatoes. He distinguished himself in high school and went to Southern to major in agriculture and become a teacher. He was a junior.

His faculty adviser, Joe G. Singleton, called him a "gifted young man" active in Future Farmers of America, the Pershing Rifles and Alpha Tau Alpha, an agriculture fraternity. He was a "C" student in college.