

# Judge OKs Tankleff's Confession as Evidence

## Calls family lawyer's story 'unworthy of belief'

By Joshua Quittner

Belle Terre teenager Martin Tankleff's oral confession that he bludgeoned and stabbed to death his parents because he was tired of driving the family's Lincoln and preferred a "sportier" car is admissible as evidence, a judge ruled yesterday.

In so ruling, Suffolk County Court Judge Alfred Tisch discredited testimony from Garden City attorney Myron Fox as being "wholly without candor, incredible to a large degree in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary and generally unworthy of belief."

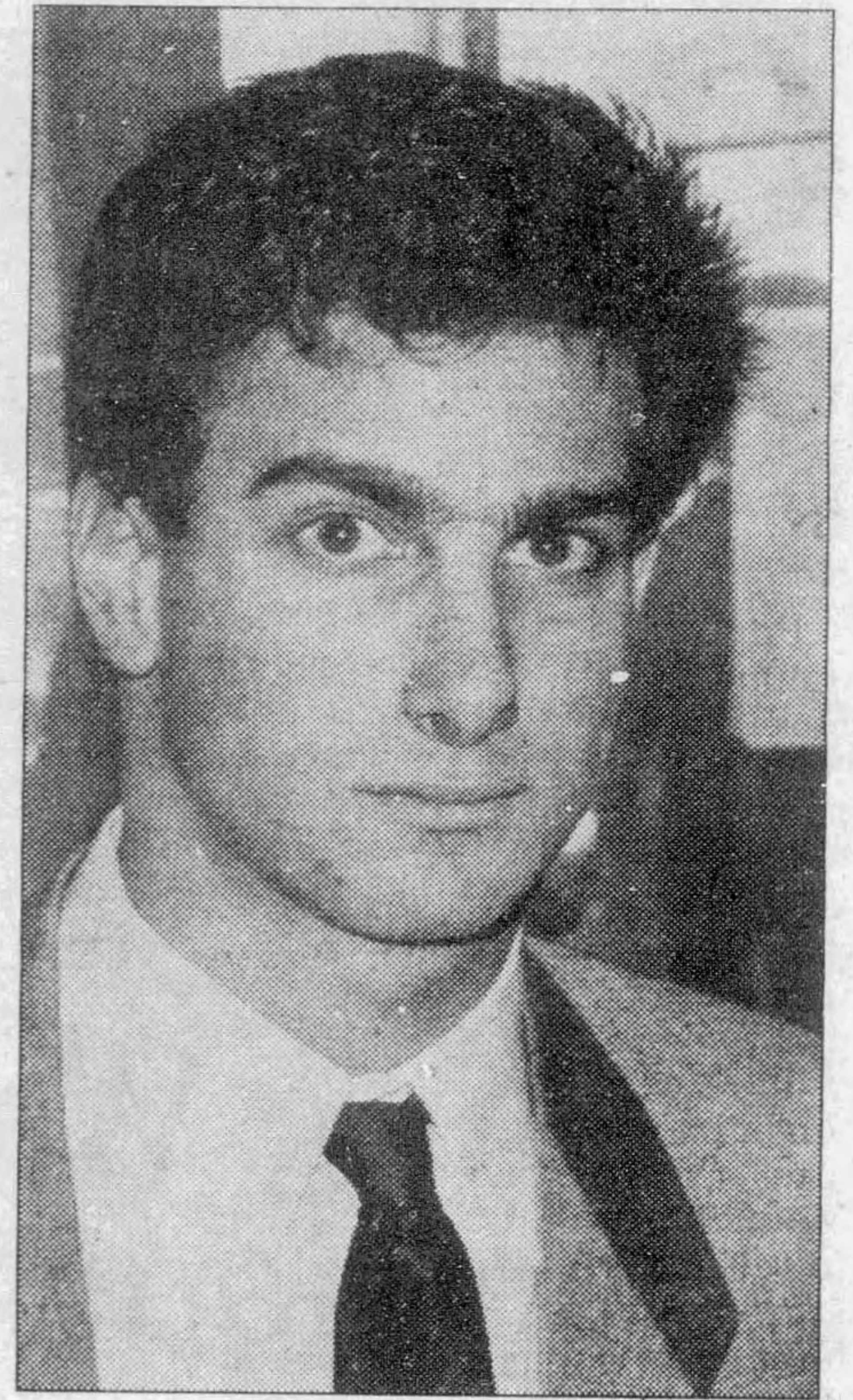
Asked for comment yesterday, Fox replied: "I know what [Tisch] said, and I don't want to ruin the kid's chances by saying anything."

Fox, a longtime friend of Tankleff's father, Seymour — and now attorney for the executor of Seymour Tankleff's \$3-million estate — had testified that he went to the family's home on the morning of the Sept. 7 murder. Fox testified that he told police that he represented Martin Tankleff and forbade them from questioning him without him being present.

Four hours later, at police headquarters in Yaphank, a police detective tricked the 17-year-old into confessing,

the detective testified. The detective, James McCready, told Martin Tankleff that doctors had revived his father with a shot of Adrenalin and that he implicated the youth.

According to his oral confession, Tankleff — who initially tried to blame the murders on his father's business partner — told police that he had set his alarm clock for 5:35 a.m. on Sept. 7, stripped off his night clothes and crept nude into his mother's bedroom, where he beat her over the head with a barbell and nearly decapitated her with a kitchen knife. He said he repeated his



Newsday / George Argeropoulos

Martin Tankleff

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# School Chief Asked to Withdraw

By Kinsey Wilson

Sachem's newly named schools superintendent has been asked by the board of education to bow out of his contract in the wake of embarrassing disclosures of expense account irregu-

larities and budget difficulties in the district he has headed in New Jersey.

Guy Sconzo, slated to take over as superintendent of New York's largest suburban district July 17, acknowledged late yesterday that Sachem board

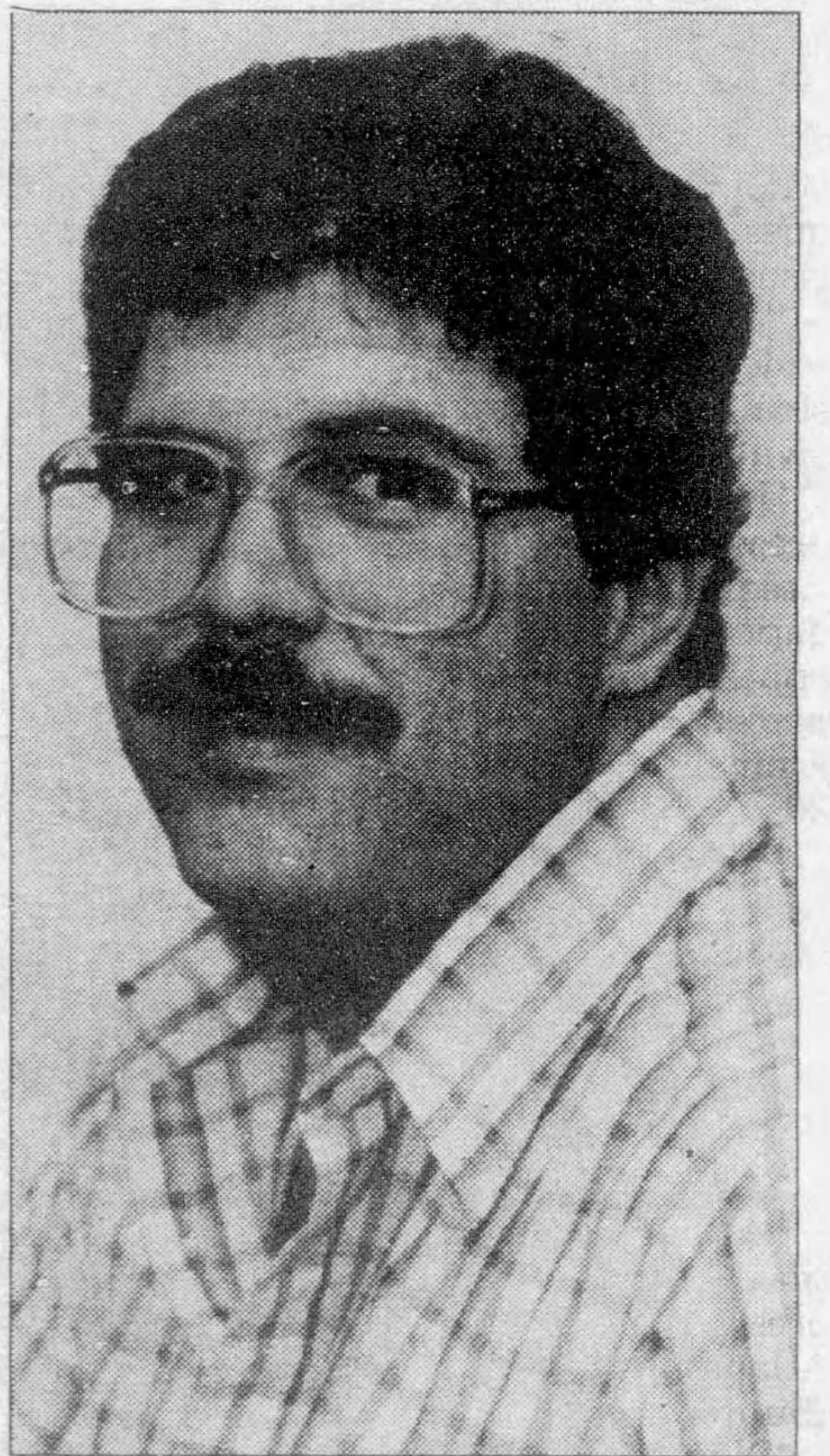
President Anthony Falco has asked him to withdraw. And retiring Superintendent Leonard Adler said he has been approached by board members about staying another year.

Sconzo said he told Falco to contact Sconzo's attorney and that he would respond before the Sachem board meets tonight to discuss the issue.

The decision to dump Sconzo was reached Friday night in a secret, emergency board meeting — convened in what state officials said was an apparent violation of the state open meetings law because no public hearing was called. School board attorney John Gross said he and eight of the district's nine board members attended the meeting, which he said was called without publication because they learned only Friday of the latest controversy concerning Sconzo.

Falco declined to comment yesterday. But a source familiar with the request said the board is prepared to take steps to terminate Sconzo's \$105,000-a-year contract if he refuses to break the three-year agreement.

Board members — already concerned about reports that Sconzo's Middletown, N.J., district will incur a \$2-million deficit this year, became alarmed when it was reported Friday that



Asbury Park Press Photo

Guy Sconzo

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# Guilty Plea in Fraud Case

By Shirley E. Perlman

In a plea-bargain agreement, the wife of John (Sonny) Franzese pleaded guilty yesterday in a credit card fraud case.

Christina Franzese, 54, pleaded guilty to second-degree attempted criminal possession of a forged instrument. She had been charged with using counterfeit cards to obtain about \$1,500.

Officials said the charges against the Port Washington boutique owner, who lives in Roslyn, stemmed from a larger investigation. They described her as one of eight people involved in what officials described as a "pattern of criminal enterprises" that included an aborted contract killing, insurance and credit-card fraud, gambling and narcotics sales.

Her husband, John (Sonny) Franzese, 69, is a reputed captain in the Columbo crime family. His son, Michael

Franzese, also a reputed Columbo family capo, is serving a 10-year prison term on a federal racketeering charge.

Christina Franzese is scheduled for sentencing on June 23 and faces a maximum of 4 years in prison.

According to Ed Grilli, a spokesman for the Nassau district attorney's office, Christina Franzese initially was charged with knowingly using counterfeit credit cards allegedly supplied by John Vanasco of East Meadow to obtain about \$1,500 from Visa International.

The charge against Franzese came when an undercover officer, Det. Joseph Bertolino, was hired by Vanasco to run a sports-betting operation.

Franzese's lawyer, Andrew Blum, could not be reached for comment yesterday. But at the time of her arrest, he denied that Franzese was connected to Vanasco's other criminal activities.

# 'Delightfully Boring Mission' Ends

Los Angeles Times

Edwards Air Force Base, Calif. — Under the blazing midday sun of the Mojave Desert, the space shuttle Atlantis glided to a flawless landing yesterday, having completed 64 orbits around the earth and giving a successful send-off for the Magellan probe to Venus and the resurgent U.S. planetary program.

Nearly an hour after putting on its brakes over the southern part of the Indian Ocean, the shuttle heralded its arrival in California with two sonic booms. At shortly after 3:43 p.m. New York time, the shuttle's wheels touched down on the dry desert lake bed that serves as a landing pad for NASA; 55 seconds later the shuttle came to a stop on runway 22.

"Congratulations! . . . You've extended the shuttle's reach far beyond Earth orbit now," astronaut Frank Culbertson, manning the communications console at Johnson Space Center's mission control in Houston, told the crew.

The shuttle descended through mostly clear skies

and high, dry temperatures, 90 degrees and climbing.

Just before the landing, mission controllers were hoping to land on runway 17, but strong and gusting winds forced a last-minute change, which left some spectators disappointed about their vantage points.

But spectators could not be disappointed about the small size of the crowds and light traffic that preceded the landing. According to NASA officials, about 25,000 were on hand yesterday, one of the smallest crowds ever to watch a shuttle landing, compared with the near-record gathering of 450,000 for the landing of the space shuttle Discovery in mid-March.

Yesterday's landing of Atlantis marks the fourth shuttle flight since the Challenger disaster in January 1986 and the 29th flight in the shuttle space program.

Rear Adm. Richard H. Truly, President George Bush's nominee to take over as head of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, described the Atlantis mission as "delightfully boring," one that went "perfectly" and "did not have to deal with life

and death issues."

To the delight of NASA officials, the shuttle was able to land successfully in much stronger crosswinds than had ever been attempted, suggesting that the shuttle is maneuverable enough to be landed at Kennedy Space Center where there aren't as many runways and there isn't as much flexibility in landing conditions.

The crew got a wake-up call yesterday morning consisting of a barking dog and the Beatles' song "A Hard Day's Night," a reference to computer repair work Sunday night. The time spent in replacing the computer meant a number of small experiments on board the shuttle had to be abandoned, NASA officials said.

Yet the most significant aspect of the Atlantis mission went off without a hitch only hours after the shuttle began its four-day 56-minute mission last week. That was the launching of the 7,700-pound, unmanned Magellan space vehicle.