

Controversial speech puts Antioch on alert

ASSOCIATED PRESS

YELLOW SPRINGS — The widow of a slain Philadelphia police officer said yesterday that Antioch College seniors should be ashamed that they chose the man convicted of killing her husband to speak at their graduation.

"He is a murderer and nothing but a murderer," Maureen Faulkner said of Mumia Abu-Jamal, who is on Pennsylvania's death row for killing policeman Daniel Faulkner in 1981.

A six-minute audiotape by Abu-Jamal, 45, will be played at Anti-

och's commencement today. His selection as a speaker has triggered opposition in the form of e-mail and faxes and put this southwest Ohio village's 13-member Police Department on alert.

Police Chief Jim Miller said officers seized "hate-type literature" Thursday attacking Abu-Jamal, a former radio journalist and Black Panther activist, from driveways and mailboxes.

Miller declined to specify the contents of the leaflets but said, "It was just an inappropriate way of supporting the execution of Mumia."

All police officers in the village of 4,000 people and all campus security personnel have been scheduled to work today. Arrangements have been made with nearby police departments to send extra officers if needed.

Miller said groups planning to protest the speech have told him all demonstrations would be peaceful.

"I think that there's very little risk of violence whatsoever," he said.

Faulkner and her supporters plan to silently protest Abu-Jamal's speech near Antioch's outdoor commencement in the morning, then turn their backs and leave as his tape is about to be played.

"He was convicted over 18 years ago by a jury that he helped select himself and, for that reason, I feel that he should forfeit his freedom of speech and not be heard," Faulkner said yesterday at a Fraternal Order of Police lodge in nearby Xenia.

"In December 1981, he took Danny's freedom of speech away from him," she said.