



**OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ATTORNEY
EASTERN JUDICIAL CIRCUIT OF GEORGIA
SHALENA COOK JONES**

PRESS RELEASE

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**CHATHAM COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY ANNOUNCES ITS
FIRST COLD CASE UNIT**

Savannah, GA – There is an old legal saying that “justice delayed is justice denied,” but the Chatham County District Attorney’s Office is working hard to show that this is not always true. Under the leadership of District Attorney Shalena Jones, veteran prosecutor and Court Operations Chief Jennifer Parker has officially established the first Cold Case Unit in the history of the office. The unit’s first cold case was resolved on Tuesday, September 14th, when the Defendant pleaded guilty to the murder of a young court reporter that happened 40 years ago.

Defendant Earl Waggy pleaded guilty to life in prison for the 1981 stabbing death of Cam Menzies. Ms. Menzies was a court reporter finishing up transcripts at the home office of a coworker at 602 East 49th Street in Savannah. Defendant Waggy and his then wife Therese Johnson drove from Darien to Savannah to return an item to the homeowner’s daughter. They arrived to find the victim there alone. Johnson indicated that she needed to use the bathroom. She emerged from the bathroom sometime later to find Defendant stabbing the victim to death. Although Johnson ran and hid in an upstairs bedroom, Defendant found her. Waggy then stabbed the victim again before leaving the house with his wife.

The case went cold until one day in 1999, when Defendant was being investigated for raping Ms. Johnson’s daughter. During the course of that investigation, Ms. Johnson told police about the murder. Although the Savannah Police Department re-opened the investigation, it did not make an arrest because the then District Attorney declined prosecution. In 2017, the case was assigned to Alan Sammons, a seasoned homicide detective and investigator in the District Attorney’s Office. Sammons re-interviewed witnesses, found new witnesses, and got corroborating evidence from several sources. The Defendant was ultimately indicted for murder and the case was assigned to Assistant District Attorney, Bradley Thompson. Without the additional evidence cultivated by Detective Sammons and ADA Thompson’s diligent trial preparation, the guilty plea might never have occurred.

MISSION STATEMENT:

“We are a diverse team of legal professionals pursuing justice for the citizens of Chatham County through fair, efficient, and ethical prosecution, strong victim advocacy, and community-based strategies to prevent and reduce crime.”

“It is incredibly rewarding to get justice for families who have waited and hoped for so long after the loss of a loved one,” said Court Operations Chief Jennifer Parker. “It takes a special tenacity on the part of the investigators and prosecutors to bring these cases to court after so many years have passed. Investigator Sammons and ADA Thompson did outstanding work on this case.” Parker said.

“I could not be more proud of the prosecutors, staff and victim witness professionals who brought closure to this bereaved family and am glad to have the opportunity to make this unit a reality for others like them,” Jones said. Ms. Menzie’s mother, father, and two sisters gave statements at the plea hearing. Presiding Judge Benjamin W. Karpf imposed a sentence of life in prison, which begins immediately.

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