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DNA Evidence Matches Sidney Goodyear in 1982 Sexual Assault and Burglary

Steven Phillips, wrongfully-convicted of these crimes was cleared by DNA testing in 2007

(DALLAS – January 30, 2008) – Today, the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office announced that a follow-up investigation which had previously cleared one man through DNA testing has now identified a suspect whose DNA matches that of the actual perpetrator in a 1982 sexual assault and burglary. Sidney Alvin Goodyear, aka Walter Von Kleist, aka William Dixon Steen, who died in a Texas prison in 1998 while serving a 45-year sentence, has been identified as a match to the DNA profile of the actual perpetrator of a Dallas County sexual assault and burglary that occurred in 1982.

DNA testing conducted during 2007 at the request of the Innocence Project had previously cleared Steven Phillips of committing the offenses when he was excluded as the donor of male DNA collected from the sexual assault kit taken shortly after the offenses were committed in 1982. Phillips was arrested and charged with the offenses in 1982. He was tried and convicted of both aggravated sexual assault and burglary in separate trials in 1983 and 1984, respectively. Juries found him guilty and sentenced him to 30 years in each case.

After Phillips was cleared in September of 2007, the District Attorney’s Office furthered its investigation in an attempt to identify the actual perpetrator.

The match to Goodyear was obtained by comparing his blood sample, which had been preserved from his 1998 autopsy, to that of the unknown perpetrator in the Dallas case. Goodyear was serving a 45-year sentence for an unrelated burglary of a habitation with intent to commit

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sexual assault with a deadly weapon when he died in a Texas prison in 1998. Records indicate that at the time of his imprisonment, he had admitted to committing a series of similar offenses all over the country.

“Being able to free an innocent man for a wrongful conviction is certainly one form of justice, but being able to go back and identify the real perpetrator is the ultimate justice for the victim,” said Dallas County District Attorney Craig Watkins. “Although this office never had the opportunity to prosecute Mr. Goodyear for these crimes, there is some comfort in knowing that he was eventually caught, convicted and punished for similar offenses.”

Steven Phillips, who is represented by the Innocence Project, was the first person cleared of a crime by post-conviction DNA testing ordered by District Attorney Craig Watkins since he took office in January of 2007. A previous request by Phillips for a DNA test was opposed by the previous District Attorney’s Office administration.

After Phillips was convicted a second time in 1984, he pled guilty pursuant to plea-agreements in eight other cases involving other victims. Those offenses occurred in Dallas, Garland, and Carrollton between April 22 and May 15, 1982, and at the time were believed by law enforcement authorities to have been committed by the same offender who committed the offenses for which Phillips was wrongly convicted and which DNA testing now implicates Goodyear. Phillips’ attorneys contend that he is innocent of those charges as well. The Conviction Integrity Unit of the Dallas County District Attorney’s Office is continuing to investigate.

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