

NEWS RELEASE

Luther Strange

Alabama Attorney General



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 12, 2011

For More Information, contact:

Joy Patterson (334) 242-7491

Suzanne Webb (334) 242-7351

Page 1 of 1

AG ANNOUNCES MURDER CONVICTION UPHELD BY APPEALS COURT IN 1980 MURDER

(MONTGOMERY) – Attorney General Luther Strange announced that the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals (on Friday, December 9, 2011) upheld the conviction and sentence of Jamie Letson for the murder of Katherine Foster in 1980.

More than 30 years after a young woman's body was found in the woods at the University of South Alabama in Mobile, a fellow student was sentenced in 2010 to life imprisonment for her murder. Jamie Letson was convicted and sentenced for the murder of 18-year-old Katherine Foster in 1980 when they were both freshmen students at the University.

The Attorney General's Office re-opened the case and prosecuted at the request of Foster's family, as well as Mobile County Sheriff Sam Cochran and then-Mobile Police Chief Phillip Garrett. Letson was indicted in November of 2008 for Foster's murder.

The Attorney General's Office presented evidence during a trial in May 2010 in Mobile County Circuit Court, resulting in the jury's verdict that Letson was guilty of first-degree murder on May 27, 2010. Both Foster and Letson were students at the University of South Alabama in 1980. Witnesses testified that Letson was jealous of Foster, and that she exhibited an extreme obsession with Foster's boyfriend.

Prosecutors said Letson lured Foster into a wooded area and shot her twice in the head. Evidence was presented that Letson confessed the crime to a member of her Alcoholics Anonymous group approximately eight years ago, and that she wrote a confession letter addressed to Foster as part of her AA program. Upon being arrested, Letson made a detailed confession to police, which was presented to the Court during her sentencing hearing. Letson's confession was corroborated by evidence at the scene of the murder.

The successful appeal was handled by Assistant Attorney General Will Dill of the Attorney General's Criminal Appeals Division. Those who handled the prosecution of this case included Assistant Attorneys General Don Valeska, Will Dill and Tina Coker Hammonds; special agents of the Attorney General's Investigations Division; Victim Service Officer Doris Hancock; and Janice Hughes who served as trial coordinator.

--30--

501 Washington Avenue • Montgomery, AL 36104 • (334) 242-7300
www.ago.alabama.gov

